

Prepare to take flight

Young Eagles Rally planned for Saturday in Mount Vernon

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MOUNT VERNON — It's an experience they'll never forget.

Youth ages 8 to 17 will get the chance to go on free airplane rides during the upcoming Young Eagles Rally from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, June 7, at Mount Vernon Outland Airport.

The airport's Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) Chapter 1155 in Mount Vernon typically hosts events of this sort twice a year, one in the late May/early June time period and another one around October. The goal of the Young Eagles Rally is to expose youth to the joys of aviation, said EAA Chapter 1155 President Steve Willis.

"Our mission is just to introduce them to the world of aviation and to possibly inspire them to look at it as a career later on," Willis said.

The rally is free and open to the public. Those planning to attend should come to the Bonnie Cafe lobby at the airport on Saturday. Parental signed consent is

mandatory for the flight, and forms will be available at Mount Vernon Airport.

"We'll have the forms at the airport, all they need to do is show up," Willis said.

According to the EAA website, the Young Eagles program was launched in 1992. It is the only program of its kind, with the sole mission to introduce and inspire kids in the world of aviation. More than 2.5 million young people have enjoyed a free introductory flight through the Young Eagles program. These flights are made possible through the generosity of EAA member volunteers, the website states.

Mount Vernon Airport Director Chris Collins said that the airport team loves hosting the Young Eagles Rally.

"It's exciting to see the enthusiasm from the kids," Collins said. "And it seems to get better every year, it's always new. We have kids that have done it before and we have a lot of new kids. It's a good mix. And the pilots enjoy giving back, and the airport appreciates them donating their time and their aircraft. And we couldn't do it without the ground support volunteers who are processing the applications, watching the flightlines, monitoring



Sentinel File Photo

YOUNG EAGLES — Connor Lentz, 8, of Bluford, smiles as he prepares to depart from an airplane during a Young Eagles Rally held last year at Mount Vernon Outland Airport. The airport's Experimental Aircraft Association Chapter 1155 in Mount Vernon will once again hold a rally from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, June 7, at the airport. Youth ages 8 to 17 will get the chance to go on free airplane rides during the event.

safety and printing certificates after the flight. So it's just a well-oiled machine that I'm super proud of."

Rallies are influenced by weather, pilot/aircraft availability and public health issues. Every effort will be made to make a timely decision if a change in Saturday's rally date is needed, states an event news release.

For more information on Saturday's rally, call Mount Vernon Outland Airport at (618) 242-7016. The EAA Chapter 1155 is always seeking new members. Anyone with an interest in aviation is encouraged to come to their meetings, which occur at 6 p.m. on the first Tuesday of the month at the local airport. 6-5-25