

Mount Vernon Airport adopts annual tax levy

*Progress also
made on community
solar project*

BY TRAVIS MORSE

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MOUNT VERNON — Mount Vernon Outland Airport has frozen its tax levy for this year at roughly \$129,000, the same as last year's amount, said Airport Director Chris Collins.

On Tuesday, Aug. 12, the Mount Vernon Airport Authority Board of Commissioners approved the airport's 2025-2026 annual tax levy, as well as the annual budget ordinance and prevailing wage rate ordinance.

In 2024, the airport adopted a levy with a 4.99% increase, but decided this year to freeze the levy and not have an increase, Collins said.

"We did take the 4.99% (increase) last year," Collins said. "That was the first time in eight years that we had done an increase. And we did not want to do that again this year, so we froze it. And we are hopeful that the personal property replacement tax stream of funds may increase a little to help us. And our new solar projects that we have put online at the airport and are out for development will help us in the future. Hopefully, there will be no more tax increases because of those things."

The 2025-2026 annual budget ordinance that was approved Tuesday had the same amounts as the tentative airport budget that was

approved in June. It is a balanced spending plan with total revenues estimated at \$1,733,162 and total expenditures estimated at \$1,731,662.

Also on Tuesday, Collins revealed that a lease option agreement has been signed to move forward with a community solar development on airport property. Specifically, the agreement allows a company called Cenergy to file for an interconnection agreement with Ameren to proceed with the project.

Cenergy plans to develop a solar farm in a 39-acre field on airport property east of the airport lake. The lease option agreement is an essential part of the project, Collins said.

"That allows Cenergy to file for an interconnection agreement with Ameren," Collins said. "And the project will only come to fruition if and when Ameren approves the interconnection agreement. What this is doing is giving them the option of going after a lease for that field assuming that Ameren is good with it. And I'm excited about it because it will bolster our operational revenue."

The site in question is ideal for a solar development, Collins said. It shouldn't have any "compatible land use objections" from the FAA. That means (that) there's no way (that) the land could be used for a taxiway or building that serves the airport, Collins said.

"Most people don't know (that) the field is there, which makes



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FROZEN LEVY — Mount Vernon Outland Airport has frozen its tax levy for this year at roughly \$129,000, the same as last year's amount. The airport board has also approved this year's budget and prevailing wage ordinance.

it a perfect candidate for a solar development. It's nearly surrounded by trees," Collins said, later adding, "There's going to be no way that any taxiway or building serving the airport could be built over there so it should flow through pretty smoothly. It makes a nearly perfect solar developable area."

Collins thanked Affordable Gas & Electric (AGE) for their help with this project.

In addition Tuesday, Collins informed the board that a committee is being formed to study some of the long-range issues with the airport's T Hangars. This will result in a management plan for those three buildings.

Also, Collins revealed that dirt work has started on the planned new snow removal equipment building at the airport. Actual construction won't occur until next summer. However, airport officials wanted to take advantage of the current dry conditions so that dirt could be moved and site work could be done for the project now.

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