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Airport Authority hears State of the Airport

Record fuel sales and operations were noted in the annual report

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SENTINEL NEWS STAFF

MOUNT VERNON — The Mount Vernon Airport Authority Board of Commissioners recently heard the State of the Airport report for fiscal year 2023-2024, which showed re-

cord-setting fuel sales and operations at the facility.

According to the annual report, nearly 160,000 gallons of aviation fuel was sold in FY 2023/2024. The exact total, 157,368 gallons, set a new record for the airport in the modern era (post 2000). The prior fiscal year's total was 139,991 gallons, Sentinel archives state. For the 23-24 year, Corporate Aircraft Association (CAA) member aircrafts — those only stopping for quick turn fuel services — accounted for roughly 22% of total annual sales.

"I'm super proud of the team for

achieving that goal," said Airport Director Chris Collins. "I set a goal of 150,000 gallons of fuel at the beginning of the fiscal year. ... We have a great team and everybody's pulling their weight and they're dedicated to what they do, and that's taking care of our customers/visitors."

Mount Vernon Outland Airport also saw a record year in calendar year 2023 for total operations, jet operations and CAA stops. During the year, there were 29,802 total aircraft operations, slightly higher than the previous year's count of 28,845. There were

also 376 jet operations, 16 more than the previous record set in 2022. In addition, there were 308 CAA stops, solidly ahead of the 2022 total of 256, the report states.

"Credit goes to many places — local and itinerant flight



Chris Collins

training, Air Evac,

aviation events such as MLSA Expo, restaurant traffic, CAA and many other factors related to Team MVN," Collins stated in the report.

Also during the fiscal year, the Illinois Department of Transportation, Division of Aeronautics Airport of the Year (Large General Aviation Category) Award was presented to Mount Vernon Outland Airport last September. Airport officials accepted the award at the Illinois Public Airports Conference in Galena.

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Furthermore last fiscal year, four new private pilot certificates (including EAA Chapter 1155's first James C. Ray Scholar Nekoda Colvin), one new sport pilot certificate and two instrument ratings were achieved at the airport. Also, nine solo flight occurrences were celebrated.

The Bonnie Cafe restaurant at the airport was also closed for 11 days last July, as the airport partnered with the restaurant on a renovation project. This involved installing new flooring, new tables/chairs, new buffets, an ice cream machine and several other amenities to make the space larger and more attractive. Seating capacity increased at the restaurant to 200. Bonnie Cafe Mt. Vernon serves more than 100,000 customers annually, the report states.

Some other notable items in the State of the Airport report included:

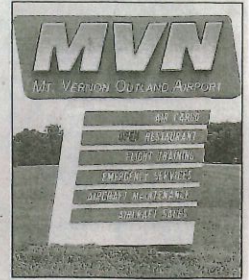
- One of three remaining World War II B-17G Flying Fortresses "Yankee Lady" aircraft visited Mount Vernon Airport in October of

2023. Members from the Michigan-based Yankee Air Museum allowed residents to tour the aircraft while it was serviced and the crew dined at Bonnie Cafe.

- Two accidents, one claiming the life of local helicopter pilot Don Pruett, caused Team MVN based Kash Helicopter Services to cease operations last July. Airport and Air Evac Life-team officials have decided to name the new Air Evac Joint Base Jefferson facility the Don Pruett Base.

- The Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award was presented by Federal Aviation Administration Springfield Flight Standards Office Management to two local aviators for more than 50 years of safe aviating. Certificated Flight Instructor Steve Willis (Lt. Colonel, USAF Retired) and local agricultural aviator Orlando Ham received their awards in September.

- Midwest LSA Expo celebrated its 25th anniversary in September. Attendees from 33 states, Canada, and the Bahamas were in Mount Vernon for three days of intensive flight activities. The event tied the now-ceased U.S. Sport Aviation Expo for the nation's longest-running sport aviation event.



Sentinel File Photo

STATE OF THE AIRPORT — Mount Vernon Outland Airport recently issued its State of the Airport report for fiscal year 2023-2024, which showed record-setting fuel sales and operations.

- On April 8, 2024, over 100 aircraft and hundreds of motorists arrived to enjoy nearly four minutes of totality for the eclipse.

The MVAA Board approved the FY 2023/2024 State of the Airport report at its Tuesday, May 14, meeting. Also at the meeting, the board discussed project updates, energy issues and had an executive session to review personnel matters.

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