

Young Eagles Rally draws crowd to Mount Vernon Airport

Organizers say that 118 kids took flights Saturday

BY TRAVIS MORSE
SENTINEL NEWS STAFF

MOUNT VERNON — Saturday's Young Eagles Rally at Mount Vernon Outland Airport proved to be very popular with the community, as 118 kids got the chance to go on a free airplane ride through the program.

The event was originally planned for June 1, but had to be rescheduled to Saturday, June 15 due to rainy weather. There was no such weather issue this past Saturday, as the day was clear and sunny and it was a perfect day for flying. The

Young Eagles Rally was organized by the airport's Experimental Aircraft Association Chapter 1155 in Mount Vernon.

"We were real pleased with it. It was a good turnout, it went really well," said EAA Chapter 1155 President Steve Willis of Saturday's rally. "It looked like they were all enjoying themselves. I know (that) a lot of them said (that) they were going to be back on Oct. 12, our next (rally)."

EAA Chapter 1155 typically hosts events of this sort twice a year, one in late May or early June and another one in the fall. The goal of the Young Eagles Rally is to expose youth to the joys of aviation and to hopefully generate some interest in aviation as a career. Hopefully, some

Please see **Airport**, Page 2A



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AIRPLANE RIDES — Connor Lentz, 8, of Bluford, smiles as he prepares to depart from an airplane during Saturday's Young Eagles Rally at Mount Vernon Outland Airport. Many kids got the chance to go on a free airplane ride that day through the Young Eagles program.

Airport:

Continued from Page 1A

of the kids whose interest is sparked at a rally will go on to become pilots after being introduced to it, Willis said previously.

Saturday's rally was free and open to the public. No pre-registration was required but kids had to have a parent present to sign all of the required paperwork. The program was meant for youth ages eight to 17.

After going on an airplane ride Saturday, Daniel Lovelock, 16, of St. Louis, called the experience "amazing" and "calming." He said that it was his second time flying in a plane and that he would consider aviation as a possible career or hobby.

"I've always wanted to get my pilot's license," Lovelock said, later adding of Saturday's ride, "It's just a smooth ride, the pilot was nice. Good stuff."

Daniel Dunne, who is from southern Illinois, also attended Saturday's rally and had two kids who were planning on taking a flight. He praised the program.

"I think it's pretty cool, you know, we get kids interested in aviation and all that goes with that," Dunne said.

Also in attendance were Dale and Jessica Lawrence of Hoffman, whose two kids, Chloe and Isaac, were planning on taking a flight. Dale said that the event would hopefully be fun for them and maybe even encourage an interest in aviation.

"When I seen it, it was like hey it's something to do, because there's not a whole lot to do for kids," Dale said.

Jessica also spoke of how the event could be very beneficial for children.

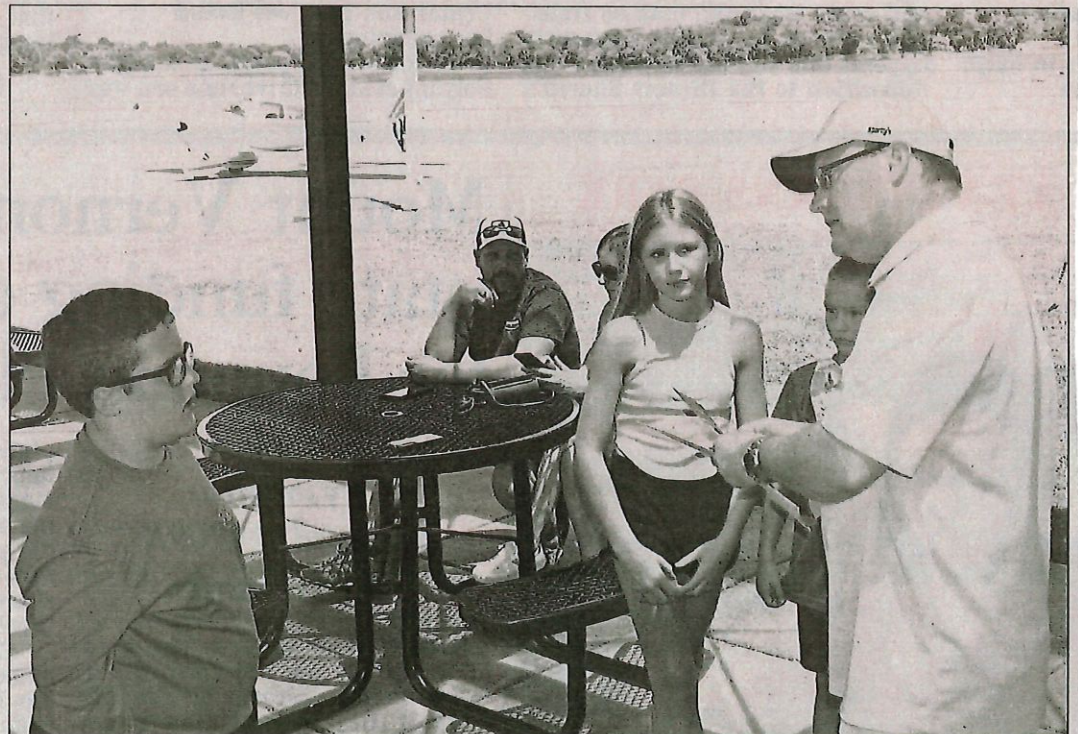
"To give them something different (that they're) interested in," Jessica said, adding of her kids, "They've never been on a plane before."

The next local Young Eagles Rally is planned for Oct. 12, weather permitting. For more information on the program, contact Mount Vernon Outland Airport at (618) 242-7016. tmorse@morningsentinel.com



Sentinel Photo/TRAVIS MORSE

TAKING A PICTURE — Daniel Lovelock, 16, of St. Louis, CENTER RIGHT, poses for a picture in front of the airplane he was just flying in during Saturday's Young Eagles Rally at Mount Vernon Outland Airport.



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YOUNG EAGLES — At Saturday's Young Eagles Rally, 118 kids got the chance to go on a free airplane ride. The event was organized by Mount Vernon Airport's Experimental Aircraft Association Chapter 1155.