

AI 2023 AIRPORT OF THE YEAR APPLICATION



Submitted by:
North Vernon Municipal Airport



North Vernon Municipal Airport

AI - 2023 Airport of the Year Application

The North Vernon Municipal Airport Board of Aviation Commissioners, our airport director, and our community would first like to thank Aviation Indiana for the opportunity to submit for this award once again. Aviation Indiana has continued to prove itself as a strong positive asset to all aspects of aviation throughout Indiana. The North Vernon Municipal Airport is excited to submit for the Airport of the Year award for not only the accomplishments we have achieved in the past year, but also for the on-going and sustained achievements that we have continued to accumulate over the past several years. We believe that this shows not only a single good year, but a proven history of outstanding aviation achievements for our airport and our community.

A quick summary of both the accomplishments from the past year as well as a sample of our recent historical accomplishments are included below.

PAST YEAR ACHIEVEMENTS

- » Participated in Countless Community Events & Outreach Opportunities
- » Participated in an Update to City Comprehensive Plan
- » Revamped RV-12 Build Project Including High School Youth Participation
- » Awarded Ray Aviation Scholarship Covering Flight Training for Youth
- » Host Site of Guardian Response 23, a National Disaster Preparedness Exercise
- » Recruited the Airport's First Based FAR Part 135 Operator, Flying Falcon 900EZ
- » Installed New 15,000 Gallon Jet-A Above Ground Fuel Farm
- » Locally Funded Extension of Natural Gas Service to the Airport
- » New Locally Funded 80' x 80' Corporate Hangar
- » Hosted Young Eagle Rallies which introduce Aviation to over 100 youth
- » Hosted the Annual Fly-In

OTHER RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS

- » Locally Funded Sewer System
- » Locally Funded High-Speed Internet Fiber Service to the Airport
- » Indiana Aviation Youth College Scholarship for Local High School Seniors
- » Installation of Video Conferencing System
- » Completed design of Taxiway A Relocation project (FAA-funded)
- » Fully utilized all CARES/COVID relief funding
- » Updated Joint Land Use Study with the Muscatatuck Urban Training Center
- » Continued partnership with City of North Vernon/City Service Center on Airport Property
- » Innovative Airport Solar Farm Project
- » Locally Funded Corporate 80' x 120' Hangar





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BOAC Members:

Chuck Carson - BOAC President
Howard Malcomb - BOAC Vice-President
Steve Graham - BOAC Secretary
Rolla Millspaugh - BOAC Project Coordinator
Steve Panken - BOAC Member

AIRPORT DIRECTOR:

Ryan Curry

AIRPORT CONSULTANT:

Butler, Fairman & Seufert





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OVERVIEW OF THE AIRPORT

The current facility has two runways, 5/23 which measure 5,002 feet x 75 feet, and 15/33 measuring 2,730 feet x 60 feet. The main runway can easily accommodate most business jets and turbo-prop aircraft, up to 100,000 lbs. single-wheeled aircraft. The airport houses 36 based aircraft and has recent operations counts of approximately 13,500. The airport offers many attractive services that include flight training and aircraft acquisition assistance offered by Huddleston Aviation, Cherry Hill Aviation, and Browning Aviation Services; FAA-approved flight simulator provided by the local EAA Chapter; a full-service maintenance shop offered by St. Anne's Services, and Macs Seaplane Services; Aircraft Restoration services also provided by Stoinoff Restorations. The modern terminal at the airport which offers amenities such as a passenger lobby, conference rooms with video conferencing capabilities, high speed wireless access, pilots' lounge, real-time weather and a flight planning room, along with two courtesy cars for transient aircraft operators to utilize for the daily visits to the local community.



The airport is served by a Board of Aviation Commissioners which includes:

President Charles Carson, who is a local businessman who joined the Board in 1990. Chuck has served as president on the BOAC for the last 23 years. Chuck is a pilot and owns a Cessna Cardinal. He and his wife previously owned Tenn Oaks Furniture, a local furniture and home furnishing store. Chuck is active in numerous clubs and organizations in the community, including the Rotary Club. Chuck has served as the master of ceremonies for the local chapters benefit radio auction.

Vice President Howard Malcomb has served on the Board since 1989. In that time, he has served as President for 7 years and Vice President for 23 years. Howard was also elected to the County Council for the last 29 years serving as President for 8 years. Prior to that time, he was elected to the local school board for two terms. He is active in local organizations such as the Shriners' and Masonic lodge. Howard is a pilot, and his two sons along with four grandchildren are commercial pilots and Certified Flight Instructors (CFIs). He is a member of the local EEA Chapter 1328 and the Airport's AOPA Representative.

Secretary Steve Graham has been a Board of Aviation Commissioners since 2013. Steve Graham enlisted in the Air Force in 1968 and retired in 2004 in the grade of Colonel. He has an undergraduate degree in Business Administration from the University of Alaska, a graduate degree in Management from Troy State University, and a graduate degree in Acquisition Logistics from The Air Force Institute of Technology. A lifelong runner, he has completed 43 marathons including Athens (Greece), Death Valley, and the Boston Marathon. He and his wife, Teresa, have six grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Project Coordinator Rolla Millsbaugh joined the board in 2009. Rolla has been in business in the local community for over 40 years. Rolla and his wife owned and operated Jennings County Pallets, now operated by their son and daughter-in-law. They currently own Powerlift Tri-State Doors. Rolla is a pilot who has served as president of the local EAA Chapter 1328 for several years in the past. He and his wife Linda have two children and six grandchildren.

Member Steve Panken accepted a leadership scholarship to attend Wilkes University, majoring in Biochemistry. After graduating from Wilkes University, Steve attended New York Medical School. Steve served in, and retired as a Major from, the United States Air Force after 22 years of service. Steve was assigned to the Air Force Communication Service as a communication electronics officer with responsibility for all air traffic control. Steve's civilian occupations included marketing manager for IBM Corp. Steve's last position before retiring was Executive Vice President of Enzyme Systems Company, a Biotechnology and Drug development company. He joined the board in 2015.

Airport Director Ryan Curry was hired by the airport in 2002. Ryan is a 1998 graduate of Jennings County High School and a 2002 graduate of Purdue University where he received a degree in Aviation Technology with a concentration in airport management. Ryan has championed the efforts to grow and develop the airport to its current position as a key component of the development of the community.



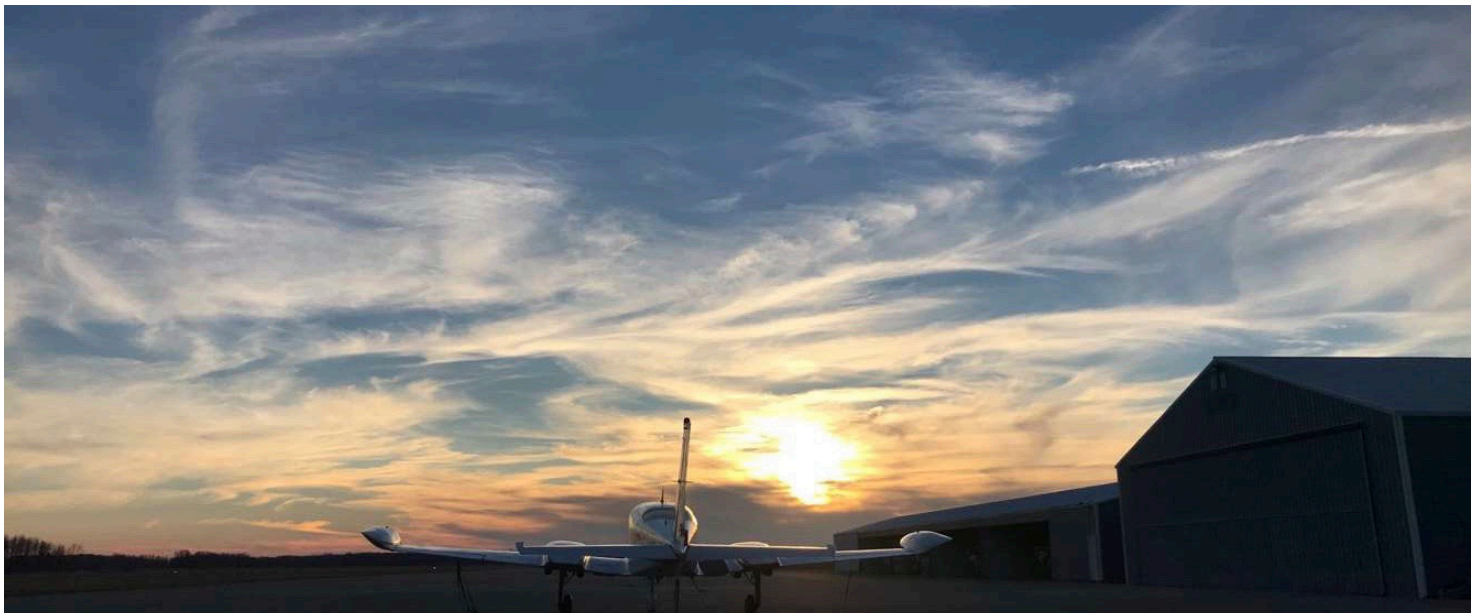
HISTORY OF THE AIRPORT

The North Vernon Municipal Airport, also known as St. Anne's Airfield, is located in Jennings County, three miles northeast of the City of North Vernon, Indiana. The airport was originally developed by the military as an auxiliary training facility for Freeman Airfield in Seymour. St. Anne's Airfield was constructed in 1943, but after only 5 years of military operations, in 1948, the airfield was deeded to the city and has been operated as a public use airport ever since. The original airfield consisted of two, 4,500 ft runways, an observation tower and two aviation storage buildings. This configuration remained constant for several years, but has over time grown to its current status, providing the North Vernon and surrounding areas with an airport that serves not only a strong general aviation presence, but is also a leading economic development tool for the community.

We recognize the efforts that have helped to grow our airport to its current status, and that our current achievements are directly related to the efforts of the aviators from our past, like Betty Cull, Robert Euler and Gilbert Green:

- » Betty "Betts" Cull was one of two women in her class accepted into the Civilian Pilot Training Program at Indiana University. She later became the only woman civilian aerial observer in the United States at the time and was based at Jefferson Proving Ground (10 miles Southeast of OVO) during WWII. She served two terms on the airport BOAC and was instrumental in persuading the government to construct an airport in North Vernon. The year following her death, she was enshrined in the International Forest of Friendship in Atchinson, Kansas birthplace of Amelia Earhart.
- » Robert "Bob" Euler entered the service during WWII and spent most of that time as an instructor pilot in the B-24 liberator. In 1958 he went to work for the FAA as a radar controller in the air traffic control center in Indianapolis. Bob served on the airport BOAC during years of steady growth at the airport and was a corporate pilot for Decatur Mold, a local manufacturing company, until the age of 76. Bob retired from active flying at 80 years of age and has accumulated over 12,000 hours of flight time.
- » Gilbert "Gib" Green was active on the board and as manager of the airport for over 17 years from 1971 to 1988. He owned and operated a full-service maintenance shop on the airfield. He pushed for the first Airport Zoning district in order to protect the airport and its expansion plans. He was crucial in the revitalization of the airport after it was virtually lost to a tornado. Gilbert donated generously to support a local city park. Sadly, Gilbert and his son were killed in a plane crash near the airport on Thanksgiving Day in 1988.

The airport along with the City of North Vernon have such a high regard and level of respect for the aviators from our past that several streets have been named in their honor, to remember and recognize them for their dedication to aviation and the local community.





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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The airport is a crucial piece of the infrastructure that supports the local community. Over the past 20 years, the airport has made a significant impact on the local community. In 1994, Lowe's Distribution Center approached the City of North Vernon and committed to developing a National Distribution Center in the local community, with the conditions that the airport runway length would be extended an additional 500 feet, and the availability of Jet Fuel would be made at the airport to accommodate corporate jet aircraft. The city and the airport fulfilled these conditions and now over 700 jobs reside in North Vernon.



In 1996, the airport was approached by a group of developers that wished to develop a professional level golf course at the airport. The airport accommodated them, and since 1996 has leased 160 acres of land that was previously undeveloped and provided no financial benefit to the airport prior to the golf course development. Today, the only 18-hole golf course in Jennings County is located on the North Vernon Municipal Airport. The St. Anne's Golf Course is an important contributor to the quality of life for both residents and visitors and an economic benefit for the local community.

In 2009 the airport and the local community were approached by the Indiana National Guard and the Muscatatuck Urban Training Center (MUTC) to develop a 30-acre Contingency Operating Base (COB) at the airport. The development more than doubled the income generated on the 30 acres when compared to the farm lease rate. Unfortunately, the Indiana Guard lost federal support for the COB in 2022. The infrastructure remains and the Airport has already begun leasing the area directly to military units and first responders training at MUTC.

TIF District Funding

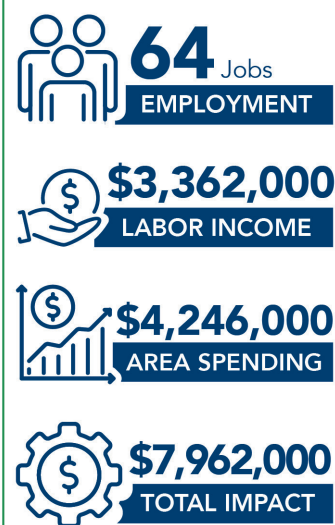
Since 2003, the airport has been a part of the adjacent Tax Increment Finance district (TIF). Inclusion in the TIF has enabled the airport to seek local match for all FAA AIP grant projects (design and construction) and well as complete several large capital projects, such as five corporate hangars, a Self-Service Fuel system, a new sanitary sewer system, new natural gas service, high speed fiber internet, a Contingency Operating Base, and a new 15,000-gallon Jet-A above ground storage tank. In 2008, the airport received FAA approval for the land release of approximately 225 acres of prime Indiana real estate for industrial development. In 2020 and 2022, the TIF funded high-speed fiber internet and natural gas projects. These projects extended these vital utilities to the airport and the airport industrial park, making both much more attractive for development. In 2023 a TIF loan allowed the completion of a new 15,000 gallon above ground Jet-A fuel system. This added capability allows the airport to capture more of the military traffic using MUTC. It also played a vital role in recruiting the airport's first based charter aircraft, a Falcon 900EZ.

2022 Indiana State Aviation System Plan (ISASP)

In 2022, the Indiana Department of Transportation's Office of Aviation released an update to the Indiana State Aviation System Plan (ISASP) and the Aviation Economic Impact Study (AEIS), which captured the economic contributions of Indiana's aviation facilities to the state's economy. Economic benefits are generated by on-airport activities, including airport operations and capital expenditures, as well as off-airport spending generated by out-of-state visitors. This initial economic activity, known as direct impacts, generates additional impacts as money flows through the economy. These are referred to as "multiplier effects" that result when a portion of direct business revenues are used to purchase goods and services in Indiana (called indirect impacts) and when wages are re-spent within the state (called induced impacts or household spending) by those who are directly or indirectly employed. Each year, the North Vernon Municipal Airport's estimated economic impact is 64 jobs valued at \$3,362,000 in labor income which translates into \$4,246,000 in induced impacts/household spending for a total impact of \$7,962,000.

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Total Annual Economic Impacts



Source: 2022 Indiana State Aviation System Plan



AVIATION EDUCATION

In our opinion the most significant accomplishment that our airport has continuously achieved year after year is the extraordinarily high level of aviation education and community outreach that we perform within our community. Besides hosting multiple aviation events at the airport each year, the airport is also involved in numerous other forms of aviation education and outreach within the local community. Born and raised in North Vernon, and a 1998 graduate of Jennings County High School himself, Mr. Curry realizes the opportunity that he has in influencing children from the local community. The airport is cooperatively involved in a high school internship program that allows juniors and seniors the opportunity to work at the airport part time while fulfilling educational requirements at the same time. These students work on various projects that range from assisting with the planning of the annual events or even assisting in the day-to-day operations of the airfield. Mr. Curry conducts multiple visits per year throughout the local school system speaking about career opportunities in aviation. The airport also hosts numerous field trips to the airport during the school year. These fieldtrips are conducted for several local school systems, and the students vary from pre-school up to 6th grade. These students get to come to the airport for a half day of aviation education and awareness.

EAA Chapter 1328

The airport is fortunate to have a very active chapter of EAA on the airport. While activity slowed during the pandemic, EAA Chapter 1328 has emerged more active than ever. In the past 12 months, the local EAA Chapter 1328 "OVO Aviators" located at the North Vernon Airport have completed several goals, started new ambitious projects, and assisted the airport on several issues. During this time EAA Chapter 1328 and its members have been involved with the following projects and accomplishments:

- » EAA 1328 Membership has Grown to 35 Members, Including Many New Student Memberships
- » Revamped RV-12 Aircraft Build Project with Students Ages 14 to 18
- » Hosted Fly In/Fly Out Events and Aviation Activities
- » Participant in Airport Safety Committee Meetings
- » Initiated an Aviation College Scholarship
- » Awarded Numerous Flight Training Scholarships to Youth
- » Several Improvement Projects for the Airport



EAA 1328 hosts two Young Eagle rallies every year at the airport. The local EAA has routinely given nearly 100 rides per year to young aviation enthusiasts looking to get their first taste of flying at their two events alone. The chapter has also been involved in the annual Airport Awareness Day providing approximately 100 airplane rides to the local community at this event as well. Most of the airplane rides given during the annual airport awareness day event are for children as well. The EAA chapter has also sponsored several projects for the airport. This group of dedicated individuals strive to promote aviation throughout the community, and especially to the youth in the local area.

The group is comprised of 35 individuals from the region, including pilots and non-pilots. Several of the BOAC members are also involved within the chapter. Airport director Ryan Curry and BOAC members Howard Malcomb and Rolla Millspaugh are all local EAA members. EAA Chapter 1328 has always supported the airport and looks forward to continuing its success and growth for many generations to come.

The EAA Ray Aviation Scholarship is a scholarship program that is funded by the Ray Foundation, managed by EAA, and administered through the national EAA Chapter network. Through the generous support of the Ray Foundation, EAA provides up to \$11,000 to deserving youths to help cover their flight training expenses, totaling \$1,800,000 in annual scholarship funding. Our Local EAA Chapter 1328 just recently awarded its first Ray Aviation Scholarship to John Reen, a local youth, and on July 31st, John successfully passed his private pilot check ride!



CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The North Vernon Municipal Airport exhibits corporate citizenship and community outreach in many ways. All of the Board Members and the Airport Director are active in the community supporting various causes which also provides an opportunity to promote the airport. Ryan conducts several public speaking events per year for the local school system, highlighting the airport's role in the community. He also presents airport development updates to several local organizations such as the local Rotary Club and the Kiwanis Club. Steve Graham is a volunteer at the Wayside Inn Homeless shelter in North Vernon and is also a board member of the Jennings County United Way. For the past 19 years, he has volunteered as a mentor at Graham Creek Elementary School helping first graders who need extra help with math or reading. Howard Malcomb is on the Jennings County Council. Board President Chuck Carson is a member of the Rotary Club and also volunteers at the Wayside Inn Homeless shelter. Steve Panken is a member of the Rotary Club. Rolla Millsbaugh supports several local clubs and organizations.

The airport is excited to be the host location for the 2024 Jennings County Community Foundation (JCCF) Gala. The event typically attracts approximately 300 community and business leaders from the area for the purpose of raising funds for local scholarships. Planning has already started for the event, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary, and the airport and the foundation hope to boost attendance for this year's event to 400 attendees.

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As the JCCF celebrates its 30th anniversary in 2024, we look forward to partnering with North Vernon Airport to help us mark this momentous occasion. The airport has had a tremendous impact on and is a key leader in our community. As such, this is an excellent opportunity to spotlight a fantastic asset in our community and bring attention to the JCCF so that we both might continue to serve the community to the best of our ability now and in the future. This event will help us celebrate our fantastic donors while also showcasing an exhilarating new location for annual gala! Changes are happening at the JCCF and partnering with North Vernon Airport is just one of the great things the community will see over the next few years!

- Jessi Hill Yarbough, JCCF

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AIRPORT SELF-PROMOTION

The airport markets itself to the community as described previously, through educational events at local schools and through community involvement by the airport director and board members, who are the champions of the airport. The airport is creating a marketing plan with a focus on drawing new development to the airport and plans on hosting an Open House in September 2023 and inviting local officials, media, and members of the public.

Each year (except during the pandemic), the airport hosts an Annual Appreciation Dinner. This dinner is sponsored by the airport and is a way for them to say thank you to the local community for the contributions they have made to the airport. The airport invites aviation and non-aviation community members that have played a key role in the airport development to attend. The event usually brings 30 to 40 friends and family together for the purpose of saying thank you for the hard work that has gone into the airport over the past year. On many occasions the airport has issued plaques for outstanding achievement to individuals for their role in promoting the airport at the annual airport dinner.

The airport allows several local organizations the use of the airport's conference room free of charge for their regular meetings and for other presentations. These groups include the local Rotary Club, Kiwanis Club, the local EAA/Pilots Club, even local companies, and military units from various locations have conducted meetings and seminars at the airport. The use of the airport's space and new video conferencing equipment is a great service for local community groups and businesses. The airport has been featured numerous times in the local newspaper, the Plain Dealer & Sun, over the years for various events and projects.



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SAFETY & SECURITY

The North Vernon Municipal Airport is inspected every year by INDOT. The last inspection found no issues and INDOT certified that the airport is in full compliance. The FAA periodically performs flight checks to confirm flight approach procedures, working navigational aids, etc. No issues have been identified by the FAA in recent years.

The North Vernon Municipal Airport places a very high regard for the safety and security of the airport including the operations of their aircraft and the pilots that operate them. In recent years the airport has taken several strides forward in improving the operational safety for its users. The airport decided to be proactive and take steps to prevent an incident instead of reacting to a situation after an issue arose. The airport created the Airport Safety Committee in 2010 with the sole task of improving the operational safety of the airport. This initiative came after noticing several issues arise at neighboring airports and wanting to take a proactive stance to protect its users and operators. The safety committee reviews plans submitted by operators that wish to conduct any operation or event on the airfield that is considered outside the norm of airfield operations. These plans are developed for such events as Young Eagle Rally's, Airport Awareness Day Event and other events in and around the COB. The Airport Safety Committee is comprised of members from the Airport BOAC, Airport Consultant, EAA Chapter, MUTC Safety Coordinator as well as the local Emergency Response Coordinator.

The airport installed a Wildlife Control and Security fence in 2010 which included approximately 20,000 feet of 10-foot high chain link fence equipped with 1 foot of barbed wire on top and a buried wildlife deterrent fence in the ground. The fence has eliminated the presence of coyote and deer on the airfield. The fence has greatly enhanced the security of the airfield by providing a nearly impassible physical barrier to anybody wishing to enter the airfield without authorization. This provides our tenants with a great sense of security, knowing that their aircraft are resting securely in the hangar and that it is unlikely to be stolen or vandalized.

In 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic being a major concern, the airport board elected to install a state-of-the-art video conferencing system in the conference rooms of the terminal building. This allowed the airport director and the board to conduct business safely and more efficiently for the duration of the pandemic. Currently the system is made available to businesses and military personnel using the airport. Also in 2020, the airport locally funded a security enhancement project. The project funded the installation of numerous high quality security cameras across the airport grounds as well as updating security and access procedures at entrance and exit points including drive gates, and the terminal.

Even though our airport has never had an incident involving wildlife, had an aircraft stolen, or vandalized we felt that these steps were necessary to ensure the safety and security of our airport and its operators. We feel that these enhancements and practices provide our airfield with a level of security that no other airport in the state can compete with!



10' Wildlife Control & Security Fence

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

North Vernon Municipal Airport has completed two major projects recently to improve the environment at the airport and to sustainably use resources. In 2017, the North Vernon Municipal Airport installed a solar ground array that produces energy to power the airport which reducing energy costs and eliminating excess charges for peak demand. The 68.4 kW system includes a remote monitoring system with demand management, LED Lighting and a back-up generator. The system powers all of the airport's energy needs as well as the needs of all airport tenants. The project cost was \$325,000 and the airport is saving nearly \$17,000 annually on utility costs. What began as an airport-only solar project soon caught the attention of city leaders. The mayor and city council were impressed by the project and launched a city-wide solar project totaling \$7.5 and earning North Vernon the nickname of "Solar City". There are now solar arrays at 22 sites across the city.



In 2023, the Airport completed a project to install a new 15,000-gallon Jet A fuel tank and self-fueling station aboveground. The project was financed through the TIF district. The new system provides an increased fuel flowage rates for faster fill-ups and the ease of paying via credit card at the pump. The airport intends to install a 100 LL fuel tank in the future, and close the underground tanks at the airport, which are a potential environmental concern.





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AESTHETICS

The North Vernon Municipal Airport Board of Aviation Commissioners has always seen the importance of maintaining the airport and associated grounds in such a way that is attractive to its users. With the assistance from the community and our consultant we have been able to combine several projects together to make significant improvements for the entire airfield. The airport is viewed as the front door to the community for many of its visitors. As the only full-time employee at the airport, Ryan is known for his friendly demeanor and excellent customer service. He is available 24/7 for any user's needs.

In the past, due to a limited budget, the airport director alone was tasked with maintaining the facilities and grounds. As activity and business grew, it became difficult for one person to balance both customer care and facilities maintenance. Fortunately, increased activity brought increased revenue and a larger budget. In 2015, the airport was finally able to devote more attention to the grounds and overall aesthetics of the airport and hired local lawn care professionals to maintain virtually all of the airport grounds. Since then, no less than two local lawn care companies have been employed annually and the difference is remarkable. Airport staff commonly receive compliments on the "new" terminal building (constructed in 1997), as well as how well-maintained the airport is.

The EAA chapter has undertaken several projects around the airport that have improved its aesthetics and functions. In the past, these projects have included such things as the purchase of flight simulator equipment and a new stone airport entrance sign. The club also assists with light maintenance and upkeep of the grounds of the airport.

In June of 2019, and then again in 2023, the airport installed 21 hangar doors on existing T-hangars that were open to the elements. In addition to protecting aircraft from extreme weather, the now enclosed T-hangars contribute to the overall tidy and clean look of buildings located on the airport. Both the 2019 project, funded with a zero-interest loan from the TIF, and the 2023 project funded with airport funds, increased airport revenue from hangar rent.

“After traveling to many airports around the country, KOVO still ranks as one of the friendliest and well-kept facilities you will find. The manner in which the terminal and grounds area is maintained truly makes it a joy to visit.

- Greg Browning, CFI &
Corporate Pilot

“As a result of ongoing efforts by the management of the North Vernon Municipal Airport, there has been noticeable and continuous improvement in the upkeep and care of buildings and grounds. The result is a pleasant and welcoming atmosphere whether arriving by air or ground!”

- Ron Huddleston, CFI





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AVIATION ADVOCACY

The North Vernon Municipal Airport advances aviation as described in the sections above as well as interacting with their peers and participating in various advocacy groups. The airport is a member of Aviation Indiana. The airport has hosted two quarterly Aviation Indiana meetings, most recently in 2017, which brings together other airports and aviation advocates from around the state. Airport director Ryan Curry and BOAC members Howard Malcomb and Rolla Millsbaugh are all local EAA members, which enables them to discuss issues and share their passion for aviation with area youth. In addition, Howard Malcomb is the Airport's AOPA Airport Support Network representative. Through these organizations, the airport is able to share ideas, contribute to important discussions regarding aviation and funding, and help others deal with issues that may arise on the airport operations or management side.

AIRPORT ADMINISTRATION

Since Ryan Curry was hired as the Airport Director, the airport's annual operating budget has grown from approximately \$86,000 per year to \$469,000 per year (more than 400% increase over 20 years). The airport sits on approximately 800 acres of property, which enables the airport to be completely self-sufficient operationally. Through hangar rentals, farm leases, land leases, fuel sales, and other innovative financing procedures the airport generates its own revenue to support airport operations without having to implement a tax on the local community through property taxes. Examples include:

- » Inclusion in the TIF district, which has enabled the airport to apply for and receive larger FAA AIP grants and allowed the airport to complete several major capital projects, which have resulted in increased fuel sales and revenue for the airport.
- » Farm leases have been updated, which has increased the income generated by nearly 30%.
- » By constructing new hangars, the number of based aircraft has increased to 36, which has resulted in greater hangar income as well as increased fuel sales.

Most recently, the Airport was able to negotiate an agreement for its first based charter aircraft. A Falcon 900EZ is now based at North Vernon, which has benefited the airport through increased operations, increased hangar rent and fuel sales. The growth in the number of based aircraft has an additional benefit—it is used by the FAA to determine annual allocations to the airport of Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding.

As a testament to the sound fiscal management of the airport, the last two audits performed by the State Board of Accounts resulted in no findings—a “clean bill of health” for the airport. The airport adopted minimum standards in 2010 and has a lease policy for all tenants, including regular reviews of lease terms and conditions.



CORPORATE HANGAR 80' X 120'





AIRPORT CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP)

Each year, the airport updates and submits a 5-year CIP to the FAA and INDOT. The CIP is regularly reviewed and changes made, based on different circumstances, including the availability of federal and state funding for AIP projects, and recently, the new BIL allocated funding. Projects in the CIP must be on the Airport Layout Plan (ALP) prior to receiving funding. North Vernon's ALP was approved by the FAA and INDOT Office of Aviation in September 2011 with several pen-and-inks since then, to reflect new developments and projects. The ALP helps give a clear direction as to the airport's growth and assists the FAA and INDOT when programming grants for future projects. The airport coordinates regularly with the community to incorporate the updated ALP into the community's comprehensive plan. Recently completed projects using AIP funds include:

- » Apron Expansion
- » Tree Clearing and Easement Acquisition for Approach Protection on Runway 5-23
- » Snow Removal Equipment Procurement
- » Hangar Construction (Locally funded, with partial Federal Reimbursement)

As reflected in CIP for the past several years, the airport recently completed the design of the Taxiway A relocation, which is necessary to correct a non-standard taxiway configuration off the end of Runway 23. However, after several delays due to lack of funding, the project has been shelved indefinitely. The airport is currently designing lighting updates for Runway 5-23, which is more than 30 years old, unreliable, and increasingly expensive to maintain. New LED fixtures will be installed, including runway edge lights, guidance signs, and a new wind cone. INDOT and FAA has indicated funding availability in FY 2024.

The airport received three COVID relief grants during the pandemic and promptly used the funds to reimburse operating costs (payroll). BIL allocated funding is authorized for five years, from FY 2022 through FY 2026. The North Vernon Municipal Airport is intending to use the BIL funds for land reimbursement. Ensuring compatible land use around the airport is vitally important. The airport director works closely and in concert with local zoning officials to coordinate and enforce local zoning ordinances that protect the airport from encroachment of development. Although the airport has had a very proactive zoning ordinance in place for several years, the need is present to continually update these ordinances for both the protection of the airport as well as for the safety of the general public.

CONCLUSION

The North Vernon Municipal Airport Board and airport director have worked diligently to be an able and willing partner for economic development in Southeastern Indiana. We strive to educate local leaders on the importance of a viable airport in the community. In addition, countless hours have been spent with local youth to educate and inspire them to consider aviation as a potential career. The partnerships that have been developed with local politicians, business leaders, and schools have fostered growth and understanding of the airport's needs and potential that will last for future generations. We consider ourselves very fortunate to experience growth and development in a time when so many local airports struggle. We also remain committed to the work and dedication necessary to ensure this trend continues. We remain committed to offering a high-quality product to our unique blend of aviation users and will always put their needs first. We understand that we are the front door of our community for many important visitors, and we pride ourselves on offering many services not found at airports much larger than our own. Our goal above all is to provide a safe, efficient, inviting, and customer-focused airport. It takes many people to make this a reality. The airport has been lucky, over the decades, to avoid the traps and pitfalls of becoming a politically motivated entity. Through stable and effective leadership, the airport has always been focused on what is best for its users and the community as a whole.

THANK YOU!

The North Vernon Board of Aviation Commissioners along with the airport director would like to thank Aviation Indiana for its many contributions to the state of Indiana, and for the opportunity to submit for the award of Airport of the Year for 2023!



LETTERS OF SUPPORT

