

Ask the CFI

What happened to the Rockford VOR?

I have frequently used the Rockford VOR (RFD) for VOR training and as a navigation aid for cross country flying to the west, but I recently noticed it was mysteriously missing from the VFR and IFR sectional charts.

A bit of online research revealed that the RFD VOR was deactivated on October 7, 2021, as part of an FAA plan to discontinue 307 VORs across the U.S. national airspace by 2030.

Several other local VORs have been shut down in the past few years including Kenosha (ENW) in June 2017 and Burlington (BUU) in November 2018. O'Hare also had a VOR until February 2019 and there was one in Kankakee until September 2020.

To date 114 VORs have been decommissioned leaving 782 currently active. This is part of an FAA strategy to repurpose the VOR network as a backup navigation service for potential Global Positioning System (GPS) outages. This backup infrastructure is being called the VOR Minimum Operational Network (MON).

You might be interested to know other VORs targeted for shut down in the Chicago area include Polo, IL (PLL), Janesville, WI (JVL), Roberts, IL (RBS), Pontiac, IL (PNT), and Peotone, IL (EON).

As far as I can tell, the Northbrook (OBK), DuPage (DPA), Badger (BAE) and Joliet (JOT) VORs will remain in service.

For more information and a complete list of VORs targeted for discontinuance go to this web page:

https://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/ato/service_units/techops/navservices/gbng/vormon/

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