

CV-TEC satellite campus provides room for growth

By **DAN HEATH**

Staff Writer

November 16, 2009 03:28 am

— PLATTSBURGH — Plattsburgh Aeronautical Institute isn't the sole star of CV-TEC's satellite campus.

The renovated CommutAir buildings at the former Clinton County Airport are also home to CV-TEC's programs for small-engine repair, welding and tractor-trailer driving.

All four programs were on display at a recent open house.

Jim McCartney has been named principal of the campus, with Terry Calabrese as assistant principal.

"It's a dream come true after five long years," Calabrese said.

CV-TEC Director Dr. Barry Mack said it's amazing how many partners worked together to make the satellite campus a reality. It was a joint effort of the business, education and government sectors.

Mack said the satellite campus has plenty of room to expand. It also frees up space at the main campus, which is important because CV-TEC has seen a 40-percent enrollment increase in the last five years.

ENGINE REPAIR

Mike Bova teaches the small-engine repair program, located in the south hangar. The move to the new space allows inclusion of a marine-technology component.

There are a wide variety of small engines to work on. The program also repairs equipment for the public.

"We do some customer relations with small-engine repairs," Bova said.

Nineteen adult and high-school students participate in the program.

The high-school students attend half-day sessions, either morning or afternoon, and can receive a certificate after two years of study.

Adults can study full day or half day, depending on their circumstances. If they are able to attend full day, they can receive a certificate with one year of study.

Small-engine repair has an articulation agreement with SUNY Canton, with credit given for work completed at CV-TEC.

welding

Tom Aubin teaches the welding program, now in the north hangar. His new space includes 10 new, state-of-the-art welding booths and a separate study classroom.

"This is definitely an upgrade," he said.

The program boasts 24 students, who attend three-hour blocks either in the morning or afternoon.

The program has an articulated agreement with Alfred University and Mohawk Valley Community College to accept up to seven credits.

"A lot of our guys go on for additional work at other schools, such as engineering," Aubin said.

He is expected to get some additional training soon so he can handle the certification process in Plattsburgh.

It takes students at least two years of study, at three hours a day, to be ready for the certification test.

Aubin said they have to perform 144 types of welds before they can graduate.

Some students have benefitted from work-study opportunities, particularly at Jeffords Steel, Aubin said.

Students need to pass the American Welding Society certification test after graduation. Many then work in union jobs, the military or additional college education, he said.

TRUCK DRIVING

Ricky Napper and Jim Herrick are the instructors for the Commercial Driver's License tractor-trailer-driving program.

Napper brings more than 31 years experience as a Teamsters driver to the school. Potential drivers need 60 hours of instruction, all in the cab of the tractor-trailer.

Drivers need to pass the New York State Department of Transportation road test to earn their Commercial Driver's License.

"This is the only school I know of where you are behind the wheel the first day," Napper said.

The satellite campus allows beginning drivers to use the runway space for practice. The runway is even striped, which helps with parking practice.

"It's like a godsend to me," Napper said.

CV-TEC's classes cost \$3,900, compared to \$9,000 at some larger schools, and financing is available.

AERONAUTICAL INSTITUTE

McCartney said Sgt. Larry Wood of the Vermont Air National Guard has been a tremendous help in getting the Aeronautical Institute up and running. That included donation of a F-16 jet engine.

Wood said the National Guard had a relationship with CV-TEC even before the institute took flight. Additional training in the guard helps students prepare for more and different types of jobs, he said. Those who join are eligible for education funding under the GI Bill.

Christopher Lago is the instructor at Plattsburgh Aeronautical Institute. The Federal Aviation Administration-certified Airframe and Powerplant school opened this fall.

The 18 students attending first-semester classes are learning electrician skills.

"Everything that they need to know to work on planes they will learn at this school," Lago said.

The students will have opportunities beyond the aviation industry, he said.

"Our graduates can work in any transportation field you want to work for," Lago said.

Those who complete the program can earn up to 36 articulated technical credits at Clinton Community College and up to 42 at Mohawk Valley Community College.

Spencer Coons of St. Albans, Vt., is one of the first-year students in the Aeronautical Institute. He said Lago is an engaging instructor and provides a lot of student interaction.

The amount of equipment available for students to get hands-on training was impressive, Coons said. He is excited about his future in the aviation industry.

"I've wanted to be an aircraft technician most of my life. The job outlooks are good for the future."

E-mail Dan Heath at: dheath@pressrepublican.com

Copyright © 1999-2008 cnhi, inc.

Photos



Guests at a recent open house for CV-TEC's small-engine repair, welding and tractor-trailer driving programs tour the newly renovated CommutAir building on the former Clinton County Airport. P-R Photo



Mike Bova P-R Photo



Tom Aubin P-R Photo



Ricky Napper P-R Photo



Christopher Lago P-R Photo



Spencer Coons P-R Photo