

# Clinton Today

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## Education

### Aeronautical Institute taking off in Plattsburgh

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PLATTSBURGH — While almost \$2.5 million in NASA and state funding is vital to the new Plattsburgh Aeronautical Institute (PAI), organizers of the project say that without the community's support the project would not be taking off.

"There have been two trends so

far (in contributions)," said Project Coordinator Jim McCartney. "It's come from the top down from the lawmakers and from the bottom up in community support and private donations."

McCartney mentioned just two of the local companies that have contributed so far are Northern Sanitation, which has donated containers and assisted with debris

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Organizers of the Plattsburgh Aeronautical Institute, from left to right, CV-TEC Director Barry Mack, Dr. Maurice "Moe" Hickey, president of Clinton Community College, PAI Project Coordinator Jim McCartney and David Lawliss Dean of Continuing Education at Clinton Community College stand in front of one of the future PAI buildings on the former Air Base flightline.

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removal from the site of the project and Primelink, which has been assisting with wiring and telecommunications. The actual buildings were gifted to the project by Clinton County.

When Sen. Hillary Clinton was in the area Monday, she made a site visit to the future campus, where building renovations are underway.

Actual renovation work on the building has come from CV-TEC students and inmates from Altona correctional facility. McCartney estimates there has been about \$3 million worth of support in equipment and labor.

"The labor has been a great learning experience for the students and doesn't cost us anything," McCartney said. "And the inmate labor is a good use of government resources."

McCartney has been the force behind the community support, according to Dave Lawliss, dean of continuing education at Clinton Community College. And long before the lawmakers stepped in with funds it was the community support that helped the project begin to take root; without it the project would not have attracted the attention of the area lawmakers.

After the area began to start making contributions, Sen. Betty Little was the first

official to step in with a promise of \$200,000, and Gov. George Pataki followed with a \$1.2 million pledge.

Donations of equipment have also been steady, with helicopters and planes being donated from local donors and across the nation.

"This project has had tremendous community support from the beginning," said Dr. Maurice "Moe" Hickey of Clinton Community College, one of the partner schools in the project. "And many of them came in at the early stages, before this project was identified as a winner."

It was announced a few weeks ago that Laurentian Aerospace Inc. had chosen Plattsburgh as its new home for an aircraft maintenance and repair facility and the PAI was a big factor in the company's decision to come here. It is expected that the PAI will supply the trained workforce for the company.

Now, the once minimal plans for a starting class of 25 next fall, is quickly expanding to try to meet the needs for Laurentian's workforce demands when it is fully operational in two years.

While dorms were once a possibility for future expansion, they have been now moved to the forefront to assist in recruiting students from across the country. Now it is possible that the first class could have 50 students, and already night and summer classes are being looked at as a possibility.

The PAI is expected to have its first class of students by fall of 2007.