

Photos



Workers from Conroy and Champlain Valley Educational Services unload a Revolution Helicopters Mini-500 that was donated to the Plattsburgh Aeronautical Institute. The helicopter and parts to a second one are valued at about \$86,000.

Dan Heath / Staff Photo

Aeronautical school gets like-new helicopter

► *Plattsburgh Aeronautical Institute staff expect to start classes this fall*

By DAN HEATH

Staff Writer

PLATTSBURGH — Plattsburgh Aeronautical Institute has landed another key piece of equipment.

The fledgling Federal Aviation Administration-certified Part 147 airframe and powerplant school received a Revolution Helicopters Mini-500 and parts that could be used to build another.

Aeronautical Institute Program Coordinator Jim McCartney said the helicopter and parts are valued at about \$86,000. It's a like-new helicopter.

"It has 1 hour of flight time and 6 hours of run time," he said. "This is a wonderful opportunity for our students to have such an intact aircraft in such pristine condition."

Equipment from the second kit will be used for classroom instruction, he said.

The kit-built, one-person helicopter was donated to the institute by Trygve Svard, a Honeywell engineer from the Minneapolis area. His colleagues helped him reconfigure the aircraft to be powered by a Wankel engine, a rotary powerplant.

That gives students another type of engine to work on and study. Svard also donated a run stand and smaller Wankel engine.

The donation was arranged through Katrina Bradshaw of BuildAPlane, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization based in Malibu, Calif. The organization is dedicated to promoting aviation and aerospace careers by giving young people the opportunity to build aircraft.

The only expense to the Aeronautical Institute was the cost of transport from Minnesota to Plattsburgh. McCartney and his wife went to Minneapolis Easter weekend to pick up the helicopter and truck it back to Plattsburgh.

Conroy and Conroy sent crane operator Ron Clark and rigger and truck driver Greg Burnell, plus two cranes, to the former Clinton County Airport to help unload the helicopter.

"This is not the first time they've helped us out," McCartney said.

They were assisted by a Champlain Valley Educational Services crew under Maintenance Supervisor Jerry Brooks.

McCartney said there's still a lot of work to be done with the curriculum, such as lesson plans, for the start of classes this fall. Construction and renovations are expected to start early next month and be completed

around the end of June.

The institute started taking applications in early March.

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