

Plattsburgh Aeronautical Institute benefits from community support

By: [Dan Heath](#)
Staff Writer

July 19, 2006

PLATTSBURGH — A huge outpouring of support and donations from local and not-so-local companies, agencies and individuals is helping Plattsburgh Aeronautical Institute take shape.

The Federal Aviation Administration-certified Part 147 Airframe and Powerplant school is scheduled to open in the fall of 2007.

James McCartney III, CV-TEC's Plattsburgh Aeronautical Institute Program Coordinator, said as of May 12, the institute had received more than \$2.4 million in state and federal appropriations and more than \$19 million in donations of materials, services, aircraft, fee waivers, supplies and equipment.

"This is a wonderful commentary on the community itself and its priorities. It shows how they have come together to benefit the people that live here," McCartney said.

That includes lease waivers from the Clinton County Legislature, which passed a resolution in March that allows the institute to lease the land and buildings at 5 Alabama Ave. and 17 Alabama Ave. for \$1 for five years, renewable in five year increments for a total of 50 years.

McCartney said that amounts to a \$16 million donation from the county.

The county has also donated numerous pieces of former Plattsburgh Air Force Base equipment valued at \$884,070.

The Atmospheric Science Research Center has donated eight Huey helicopter rotor blades, valued at \$65,000 each. Brackett Aircraft Company, based in Arizona, made an unsolicited donation of two sets of Huey ground handling wheels, which allow the aircraft to be maneuvered on the ground.

"This came from the kindness of somebody in the aircraft industry," McCartney said.

With support from legislators, the Vermont Army National Guard has donated and delivered free of charge two Huey helicopters, valued at \$300,000 each. It also donated a Huey helicopter engine and an aircraft tow bar, to which the institute is still working to attach a value.

The institute is in the process of acquiring an F-16 jet engine from the Vermont Air National Guard. It must be released by the Department of Defense, then pass through the Defense Reutilization and Marketing Service and the New York State Office of General Services.

Jim Drolette of CommutAir has donated a Douglas DC-3 aircraft and assorted parts valued at \$300,000. More recently, he donated a Fouga Jet Fighter, a jet aircraft used to train pilots, valued at \$75,000.

"This is another example of a local gentleman who is very interested in what we're doing here," McCartney said.

A North American T-39 Sabreliner aircraft, valued at \$180,000, was obtained from the Department of Defense through the Federal General Services Agency and then through the New York State Office of General Services. Former Plattsburgh airman Tim Horn, one of the directors of the Aerospace and Maintenance Regeneration Center at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson, Ariz., was extremely helpful in making that happen, McCartney said.

He said Pratt and Whitney has been a wonderful partner right from the beginning.

"Larry Trow has overseen the move of equipment and modification of the DC-3 and Fouga aircraft for transport. Doug Fage has been very receptive as plant manager," he said.

McCartney said Clinton Tube USA, which went out of business Dec. 17, 2004, donated two compressors, a pneumatic air drying system, a pallet jack and shelving units valued at \$14,400.

"These compressors are in beautiful shape," McCartney said.

He said the Plattsburgh Airbase Redevelopment Corporation has donated many pieces of equipment during the past few years and continues to make donations. To date, those donations total \$104,360.

The Burlington Technical Center provided the institute with a copy of its airframe and powerplant curriculum, a rare move between two

educational institutions.

"A curriculum is usually very proprietary. They gave us theirs," McCartney said.

In-kind services have also played a big part, McCartney said.

Northern Sanitation has donated use of two 30-yard trash containers, tool storage sheds and waived all dump fees for debris removed during the renovation process.

"Northern Sanitation has been an incredible partner. They have donated \$31,000 in services," McCartney said. "As soon as the containers are full, we call and they send someone right over. That's been a key to our timeline."

McCartney said Rene's Repair has provided a free energy study on the two buildings valued at \$3,500.

"They also installed, without charge, our natural gas lines," McCartney said. "We just bought the materials, at a reduced rate."

PrimeLink sent two pieces of heavy equipment to the site and provided two operators for two weeks. They were able to dig and bury the primary and secondary electrical lines, install a transformer base, dig a trench for gas and phone lines.

"They also donated conduit for our phone, fiber, security and fire alarm systems," McCartney said.

CV-TEC's programs and instructors have provided more than \$250,000 in services from the drafting, computer technology, conservation, electrical and building trades programs, along with help from an Altona Correctional Facility work crew.

"It's also providing our students with educational opportunities as we move forward," McCartney said.

The Clinton Community College Foundation came up with money to allow the asbestos abatement to take place, which will be paid back when funding secured by State Sen. Betty Little's office comes in.

"That had a domino effect in moving the project forward, as everything would've been on hold," McCartney said.

The institute wants to make a special note of thanks for support from local businesses Gregory Supply, Ward Lumber and Warren Electric, McCartney said.

CV-TEC Director Dr. Barry Mack said the support for education from businesses and the community has been amazing, unique in his 30 years of experience.

"I recently told Sen. Clinton this is an unprecedented partnership. Our partners are growing and I'm very pleased by that," he said.

McCartney said the project would not have been possible without support from all levels.

"The community is helping itself for a project that will have a long-term effect on our economy and employment," he said.