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## Aeronautical Institute gets financial boost

By JOE LoTEMPLIO, Staff Writer

PLATTSBURGH -- The fledgling Plattsburgh Aeronautical Institute has received a major financial boost from Washington. The institute is targeted to receive \$1 million in the 2006 federal budget, which will go a long way toward creating the new center.

"This will give us the foundation for launching the Plattsburgh Aeronautical Institute and will help us greatly with work on infrastructure," said Dr. Barry Mack, director of CV-TEC, which is overseeing the project, along with Clinton Community College.

The institute, which is scheduled to open in September 2007, will provide technically skilled job-training programs and professional-development opportunities for high-school students and adults.

It will be housed at Plattsburgh International Airport, which is under construction at the former Plattsburgh Air Force Base flight line.

The institute will also support existing aeronautical firms and help attract new companies.

Mack said the federal funding will help not only with construction costs but with curriculum development.

"This program will help the Pratt & Whitneys and other companies at the airport," Mack said.

Pratt & Whitney is the major tenant on the flight line, operating an engine-testing facility.

CV-TEC will utilize its drafting and building-trades programs to help serve the institute.

The \$1 million represents about half of what the institute will need to get up and running.

"We are still searching for other grants and other support," Mack said.

The seed money was included in the Senate-House Conference Committee's budget for Commerce, Justice and Science for fiscal year 2006.

It was supported by U.S. Sens. Charles Schumer (D-Brooklyn) and Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-Westchester) and Congressman John McHugh (R-Pierrepont Manor).

The institute also received a boost last month when State Sen. Betty Little (R-Queensbury) helped secure \$200,000 for a new hangar to house instructional aircraft.