

Photos



Jim McCartney, Plattsburgh Aeronautical Institute project coordinator, updates members of the Plattsburgh Noon Rotary Club about the status of the institute. Despite some setbacks, the institute still plans to open in the fall of 2008. Staff Photo/Michael Betts /

Published December 08, 2007 01:00 am - Plattsburgh Aeronautical Institute and county officials continue to work to help the aeronautical institute find a home at the former Clinton County Airport.

Plattsburgh Aeronautical Institute still plans to launch next fall

Plattsburgh Aeronautical Institute prepares for fall launch

By **DAN HEATH**

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PLATTSBURGH -- The Plattsburgh Aeronautical Institute continues to move toward liftoff in September 2008.

Project Coordinator Jim McCartney of CV-TEC and Clinton Community College Assistant in Continuing Education Peter Grosskopf recently provided an update on that progress to the Plattsburgh Noon Rotary Club.

SECURING A HOME

McCartney said the next goal is to complete negotiations with Clinton County on short- and long-term plans, as well as to finalize lease arrangements, with an option to buy, for the CommutAir buildings at the former Clinton County Airport.

"We are optimistic this space will meet our needs very well," he said.

Plans to move the institute on the flight line at Plattsburgh International Airport were changed after the Federal Aviation Administration required Clinton County to get fair market value for property at the new airport.

The Aeronautical Institute had an agreement to lease property there from the county for \$1 for 50 years and didn't have money in its budget to pay fair market value.

Now, the FAA is requiring the county to obtain fair market value for property at the former County Airport, too. The Aeronautical Institute is hopeful donations and renovations at the original flight-line location, which total about \$270,000, can be used as part of that.

Grosskopf said having a location for the school is critical to FAA certification, as it requires the equipment and machinery to be set up to show how they will be used for instruction.

MORE EQUIPMENT

The Aeronautical Institute also continues to solicit equipment donations and federal and state funding.

McCartney said the institute has signed a contract with Pratt and Whitney Canada to receive eight aircraft engines valued at \$372,000.

He said that as the Plattsburgh Airbase Redevelopment Corp. moves toward the end of its mission, it has been very generous with equipment, machinery and supplies that can be used at the school.

McCartney said the Aeronautical Institute is working with FedEx toward donation of a Boeing 727-200 jet. That would benefit the school's goal to train students to work on any aircraft and engine. It would also help attract adult students to the school, as they realize their training would be that comprehensive.

That type of training is an important part of attracting companies like Laurentian Aerospace Corp., which has said it wants to establish a plane-refurbishing operation at Plattsburgh International Airport.

McCartney said Laurentian officials have indicated they would be interested in employing graduates from the school in jobs that pay about \$49,000 a year.

CURRICULUM PLANNED

The Aeronautical Institute is nearly done writing its operations manual, the instructional curriculum that will be used for certification, McCartney said.

The articulated program is being designed to allow juniors and seniors to earn more than 30 college credits while still in high school. They would be able to earn an associate's degree after only one more year at Clinton Community College and be eligible for FAA-certification as Part 147 airframe and powerplant technicians.

Grosskopf said he has worked with the faculty at Clinton Community College to develop its aviation technology associate's degree program. That has been OK'd by the State University of New York but still requires approval by the New York State Education Department.

Aeronautical Institute partners remain optimistic the school will open next fall.

"We are opting to work with our partners at the county and The Development Corporation to move forward and establish an aeronautical school that will meet the needs of our business partners," McCartney said.

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