

# Aeronautical Institute makes progress toward opening

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PLATTSBURGH — Donations and assistance continue to fly in to Plattsburgh Aeronautical Institute as it moves toward a fall opening.

Clinton Community College and CV-TEC are partnering to create an FAA-certified Part 147 Airframe and Powerplant school on the flight line of the new Plattsburgh International Airport. Plattsburgh Aeronautical Institute Project Coordinator Jim McCartney said it's estimated the institute has received \$22.5 million in grants, leases, donations and contributions.

That includes a recent decision by Pratt and Whitney Canada to donate eight PT-6 turbine engines, valued at \$320,000.

"They are basically a staple of the aviation industry. It is a sufficient number of engines to meet our instructional needs," McCartney said.

He said the institute is excited about a partnership with ACES Systems, a Knoxville, Tenn.-based company that manufactures aviation maintenance equipment.

"They have agreed to provide us with an entire kit of propeller-balancing equipment. They have also agreed to calibrate it on an annual basis," McCartney said.

The institute is close to securing a partnership with Lycoming, a Williamsport, Pa.-based manufacturer of piston aircraft engines. McCartney said it appears the company will be able to supply the institute with four- and six-cylinder aircraft engines.

Institute representatives recently sent requests to New York Gov. Eliot Spitzer, State Sen. Betty Little and Assemblywomen Teresa Sayward and Janet Duprey for an additional \$600,000 for instructional equipment.

They also asked U.S. Senators Hillary Rodham Clinton and Charles Schumer and U.S. Representatives John McHugh and Kirsten Gillibrand to secure \$300,000 for training and instructional equipment.

In November, the institute appointed Bill McLaughlin as its first Airframe and Powerplant instructor, McCartney said.

He said McLaughlin comes to the school from Pratt and Whitney. His extensive aviation background includes studies at the Pittsburgh Institute of Aeronautics, a degree from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and airframe, powerplant and aviation flight training.

"He is a hard-working colleague who has made tremendous strides in writing and developing our Part 147 curriculum," McCartney said.

The curriculum is being designed to also meet standards of the Canadian Aviation Maintenance Council and Canadian Aviation Regulations.

"We are developing a curriculum that exceeds our Part 147 curriculum in anticipation of the arrival and needs of Laurentian Aerospace (Corporation). We've had discussions with Laurentian on what they want from our graduates," McCartney said.

The institute and The Development Corporation have been working closely to ready space at 5 Alabama Ave. for a 10,000-square-foot hangar and annex facility, McCartney said. Bids for construction are expected in the near future, he said.

McCartney said the institute is grateful to Aird Dorrance for its donation of New York State Department of Education-compliant blueprints and mechanical drawings that will allow the building's air-handling system to go out to bid.

He also thanked Hulbert Brothers for their willingness to meet the institute's plumbing and electrical needs.

"It's been a remarkable experience for me to see such generosity and support from the community," McCartney said.

McCartney said 80 people are on a waiting list to enroll in the institute.

CV-TEC Director Dr. Barry Mack said the plan is to enroll 25 high-school students (juniors and seniors) and 25 adult learners for the first classes this fall.

High-school students will attend classes during the day, and adults will attend at night.

The first high-school graduating class is expected in 2010, McCartney said, and the first adult learners are expected to graduate in 2009.

The articulated program will allow high-school students to receive college credit for some of the classes they take. He said those high-school students could be two-thirds of the way toward an associate's degree by the time they leave high school.

"I don't know of a more affordable way for a student to be certified as an airframe and powerplant technician and also receive an associate's degree in aviation technology," McCartney said.

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