

# The Leading EDGE

Education+Delta+Greely+Excellence

Spring/Summer 2014

## Partners Support Delta High School Aviation Program through Generous Support from Boeing Company

In his column in Piper Flyer, Michael Leighton bemoans the toll taken on the aviation industry since 1980—an industry that is “within the financial and practical reach of a broad cross section of the population.” One of his solutions to recapture the “value to the economy, small business and the quality of life” in the U.S. is to have “more aerospace programs in more high schools.”

Delta High School Career and Technical instructor Gary Hall says, “This is exactly why we launched a program last fall. We have a major aerospace industry leader, Boeing, right here in our backyard, and Alaska

UAF Aviation faculty member Kevin Alexander calls the Aircraft & Powerframe program a feeder for engineering careers. . .



Kevin Alexander

has been and continues to be all about aviation to reach many areas of the state. It is a way to earn a living and contribute to the economy.”

Boeing has been a long-standing supporter of Partners for Progress

in Delta, Inc.—they were at the table in 2003 when the educational partners began discussing how they

*continued inside*

## SPOTLIGHT:

### Delta High School Graduate Accepted into Diesel/Heavy Equipment Technology

Josh Carson graduates from Delta High School in May and he knows now what he will be doing in August. He said he started high school not knowing what he wanted to do.

Josh Carson

His mom suggested he take welding as an elective in his freshman year and he continued on with it. He said, “It just grew on me. I enjoyed it and took three years and as a senior

got to be an aide for Mr. Hall’s fall welding class.” Beginning this fall he will begin intense training

Carson is one of 20 applicants who have been accepted for the fall 2014 class in Fairbanks.

in the UAF CTC Diesel/Heavy Equipment Technology certificate program in Fairbanks.

His sophomore year he took basic automotive and AutoCAD with Mike Adams. He said all the classes with Adams and Hall are incorporated into diesel mechanic. He began to focus on diesels because they have several at home and they have trouble from time to time so he wanted to pursue being able to fix problems. Carson is one of 20

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## 9th Heavy Equipment Operator and Mechanic Academy

Executive Director of the Alaska Operating Engineers and Employees Training Trust (AOEETT) Ken Peltier recently designated the Delta Introduction to Heavy Equipment Operator and Mechanic Academy as an approved pre-apprenticeship training program with the possibility of direct indenture into the Operating Engineers.

Significantly, this means that the participants of the Delta Career Advancement Center’s three-week intensive program have a competitive edge in earning placement into the Operating Engineers. The 9th Introduction to Heavy

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## The Partners

Alaska Works Partnership  
alaskaworks.org

Delta/Greely School District  
dgsd.k12.ak.us

University of Alaska  
Fairbanks Community and  
Technical College  
ctc.uaf.edu

University of Alaska  
Fairbanks Cooperative  
Extension Service  
uaf.edu/ces

Operating the  
Delta Career Advancement  
Center

could address the shortage of skilled workers in the area at a time the US Department of Defense had selected Fort Greely as home for the Ground-based Midcourse Defense System. Since that time Boeing not only contributed to the construction of the Delta Career Advancement Center, which opened in 2005, but also

made an additional gift to enrich and develop programs that help build our workforce and make Alaskans competitive for jobs in Alaska. Partners' board member Eric Stewart said, "Without question, it was a natural fit to use some of the money generously donated by Boeing to help

fund the new aviation program at the high school."

Boeing's Fort Greely site manager Don Diekmeyer has been in Alaska since 1972. He's worked on the pipeline for Alyeska and as a director for the State of Alaska in Juneau. He lived in Delta for a while during the oil pipeline's construction and has been with Boeing since 2003. He was glad to be back in Delta when Boeing transferred him from Shemya to join the Fort Greely team in 2007. He says, "Our team is comprised of not only engineers, but represents many diverse skill sets. It takes everything from logistics coordination, cybersecurity, mis-sileers, and boom truck operators to keep this project and site running smoothly." He went on to note, "Having local

training and education opportunities in Delta is good for building a workforce."

A recent hands-on field trip of the Build-A-Plane class to Fairbanks included time at the University of Alaska Fairbanks Community & Technical College (UAF CTC) hangar on the east ramp of Fairbanks International Airport. UAF CTC is a founding partner of Partners for Progress in Delta, Inc. and career pathways from high school to beyond are important discussions. Jared Smith, a 2013 graduate of Delta High School, will complete his UAF CTC Aircraft & Powerframe (A & P) certificate program at the end of September 2014. He said his dad and both grandparents inspired him to pursue a career in aviation. His long-term

goal is to be involved in aerospace engineering, but he credits his high school Metals instructor Gary Hall for inspiring him to think about the A & P as a pathway to that goal. "Gary Hall was a great instructor and he's one of the biggest reasons I pursued the trades and hands-on work." He thinks the new aerospace class at Delta High School is great. "I would have been right there if it had been offered when I was in school," he said.

UAF Aviation faculty member Kevin Alexander calls the Aircraft & Powerframe program a feeder for engineering careers, including becoming a pilot, taking additional classes to earn an engineering degree and going on to aerospace engineering. He and Roger Weggel are currently working on developing the curriculum for an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) emphasis within the program, strengthening its offerings to be recognized as an Aviation Center of Excellence. He says, "UAF is now one of six Federal Aviation Administration designated UAV test sites, and it's the largest of the six (nationwide). UAV activity is growing rapidly and we need to train our students in this new technology." UAF will manage the Pan-Pacific Test Range Complex. Partners are located in Oregon and Hawaii.



*Vocational Education instructor Gary Hall talks with former Delta High School graduate Jared Smith during a Delta High School "Build-A-Plane" class field trip to the UAF CTC Aviation Hangar at Fairbanks International Airport.*

### *Student Quotes From the Fieldtrip to Fairbanks International Airport to visit the UAF CTC Aviation Hangar and Aircraft & Powerframe Program, the Tower at the airport and the Air Museum.*

"The trip **changed my viewpoint** when I saw the different things that involved planes. I didn't think it was that complex. The trip enlightened me on how I look at the aviation industry."

"Visiting the A & P school **gave me motivation** to keep going, and pursuing my goals."

"This trip was very important for me and my flying career. It opened up **more options** for me in my life to find a career."

"At first I didn't really like this class, but the more I learned the better it got."

"To be entirely honest, I joined this period 2 class to not take an art class. I have never had an interest in any aspect of aviation...this class has given me a **new view on the world**, as well as, showing me a whole new world that is aviation.

Within this course is a learning experience of a lifetime. It handles both mind and hands-on learning that expands our brains..."

"What caught my attention was the **sheer magnitude** of jobs in the aviation field."

"I think this trip was important for the broadening of the class. I had known most of what we saw, but I **greatly enjoyed the experience**. I still want to teach English, but now I can say 'Yes, I do know' when asked about certain things in aviation and that's rewarding."

"By taking apart a wing I've seen that the insides are **way more complicated than I thought**. The amount of pieces put together to form just one wing is quite a lot."



## Relevance in the Classroom

Each week this year a cohort of Delta high School math students, part of an innovative “Easy Up” program at the school, cross North Clearwater Avenue to walk into the Delta Career Advancement Center. Construction Trades instructor Gary Hall spends an hour with them, making math concepts relevant to these students. Easy Up, designed by the school’s math instructors, aims to help all students in each of the areas of math knowledge and skills.

Math teachers Mike Adams and Erin Dvorak took the lead with a team working as a professional learning community to address the challenge of low math scores in the high school. Adams said, “The team looked at a number of options and Easy Up evolved from that.” He went on to say, “As far as I know our approach is unique among high schools around the state.” Easy Up stands for Enrichment-Assessing-Skills-You-Use-Providing success.

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The teachers use math proficiency tests given to all levels to track student knowledge to chart areas of strength and weaknesses. When they come to the Career Center they focus on proficiency in measurement, volume and angles.

Whether it’s using a protractor or tape measure, students discover the importance of getting the angle correct if you are charting a cross-county flight or measuring boards accurately to build a table or a cabin. They learn that just a fraction off can land you in the wrong spot or corners not square in a building. Hall says while students can read a tape measure, the really aren’t sure how to use it. He has watched students become excited about a concept once they consider its application and relevance.

Board member Duncan Ware and Delta/Greely School District superintendent says, “This program has increased student awareness about career options that require mastery of these principles to get a job, and more importantly our scores are improving.”

## Aircraft Fabric Recovering Workshop



*At work with irons during the Aircraft Fabric Recovering Workshop!*



*From left the participants of the March 29 “Aircraft Fabric Recovering Workshop” held at the Career Center: Gary Hall, Allen Levinson, Richard Gardner, Don Quarberg, Ben Holbrook, David Sutherland, Jack Morris, JW Musgrove, Ron Lester, Butch Brant, Jon Brant, and instructor Vickie Domke of Tamarac Air front center. The workshop focused on using the newest technology for recovering fabric on small aircraft.*



# 9th Heavy Equipment Operator and Mechanic Academy

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Equipment Operator and Mechanic Academy is set for June 3-20 in Delta. The process is competitive and the class is limited to 10 participants. Qualified applicants are interviewed and all successful candidates must pass a drug test before acceptance into the program.

**"Some of our best apprentices, top in the class, came from the training program in Delta."**

Peltier said, "The Delta program has consistently delivered a high quality academy with a strong emphasis on safety, work ethic and team work. We couldn't be more pleased with the folks who applied and we accepted in the past." He went on to say, "Some of our best apprentices, top in the class, came from the training program in Delta. We also like the increased focus on heavy equipment mechanic training as there is a shortage statewide of skilled heavy equipment mechanics."

## SPOTLIGHT continued from cover

applicants who have been accepted for the fall 2014 class in Fairbanks. Carson will be staying on campus and is interested in working as a shop hand in a real diesel shop. He wants to get a feel for the real workplace environment. His program begins at 3 pm and last through 8:30 pm so he has mornings to do something that gets him close to diesel.

Asked about the distance from Delta, he said he has worked summers with the Salcha/Delta Water Conservation District and is out in the field so he should be comfortable away from home, though he believes his younger sister will miss him.

Carson loves Alaska and his goal is to stay in Alaska. "That's why I

looked at UAF CTC because the Universal Technical Institute he had researched would take him out of state. He said he moved around a lot as "an Army brat," but when his family came to Alaska he loved it and wants to work and live in Alaska. The UAF

**The UAF CTC program has an 80% job placement rate . . .**

CTC program has an 80% job placement rate and he is especially interested in working in the man camps associated with big projects to get settled financially and then he could look toward Delta and what might be available. Asked if he is ready for the move into a college program, he said "The classes I took

with both Mr. Hall and Mr. Adams have given me the training so I feel ready for this next step."

He credits the Delta Career Advancement Center with trying to stay one step ahead to provide classes that mean something. For example, he notes that Gary Hall incorporates

real things into his welding classes so if a student wants

to work on a special project, it's possible. The student is encouraged to prepare a material list and purchases metal if the project is bigger than what the class supply might provide. "With the welding classes, everybody gets a handle on the thinking process behind every project," he said.

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**MISSION** Partners for Progress in Delta, Inc., (PPD), an educational consortium in Delta Junction, Alaska, serves as a gateway for learning and training to help build and maintain Alaska's workforce.

### GOALS

- Help Alaskans be competitive for jobs emerging from new developments and existing workforce opportunities in the area;
- Be a focal point for Alaskans who seek career advancement education and training, academic degrees and continuing education credit;
- Help prepare secondary students for career options;
- Identify area needs for education and training for long-term employment; and
- Create and nurture long-term partnerships with agencies, businesses, organizations, the trades and government.

### TOP PRIORITIES

- Create solid pre-training opportunities to help the success rate of future skilled workers.
- Customize intensive training academies to ready prospective workers for real-world opportunities.
- Deliver core and essential academic courses for those seeking university degrees.
- Develop a cadre of qualified local instructors.
- Identify options for encouraging and helping regional students participate in training.
- Build a stand-alone expansion to meet the needs of the community.

Partners for Progress in Delta, Inc. supports career pathway programs to help build Alaska's workforce. Partners for Progress helps operate the Delta Career Advancement Center and is a state-recognized Regional Training Center (RTC). Regional Training Centers deliver career and technical education and training to create a skilled workforce, and as such, it receives funding through the Technical and Vocational Education Program of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Division of Business Partnerships.