

ACC course aims to fill local jobs

by **Jenny Haglund**

OSCODA – A new program, laboratory and instructor will all be introduced to the Huron Shores (HUSH) campus of Alpena Community College (ACC) this fall.

The Oscoda branch of ACC, located on the former Wurtsmith Air Force base, will be host to an updated industrial technology certificate program, which will be of particular benefit to local students who wish to remain in the area.

While the program has been in place for some time at the main campus in Alpena, this is the first technical program Huron Shores has ever had, said Nancy Seguin, dean of students.

The program is designed to aid students in obtaining employment into entry-level positions in industry and manufacturing. Courses will include basic knowledge of a variety of necessary skills to attain and maintain employment in today's industrial workforce.

Jon Fox, who grew up in Millington but currently resides in West Branch, is new to ACC and will be serving as the industrial technology instructor.

He explained how the updated program differs from previous offerings, saying, "I'd like to think that there's a lot more substance to what we're presenting here. There's going to be a lot of hands-on involved."

He added that a few courses have been changed and welding, which has never been offered at HUSH, will also be a requirement.

"We're really looking to cater to local industry, as far as representing their processes and their manufacturing techniques. So a lot of what you'll see in our labs will reflect what's on the manufacturing floors here at Phoenix Composite, the composite shop at Kalitta and some of the other places," said Fox, referencing a couple of the businesses also lo-

See JOBS, Page 13A

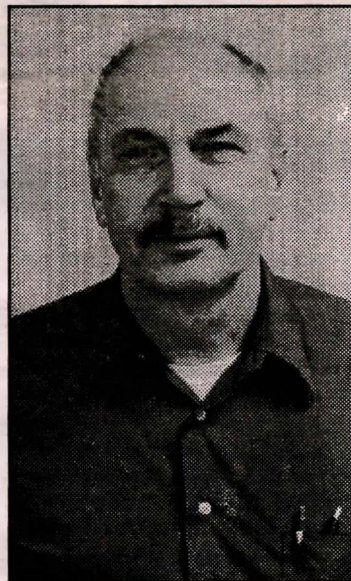


Photo by Jenny Haglund
INSTRUCTOR – Jon Fox will be leading the industrial technology program at the Oscoda branch of Alpena Community College, which is the first of its kind at the campus.

LOCAL NEWS

JOBS

Continued from Page 1A

cated on the former base.

According to Seguin, what is really important to note, is that this is a one-year certificate program. "So students who go full-time for two whole semesters can get the certificate at the end of two semesters, that's one year, and go to work."

She said this is ideal for those students graduating high school who, at this point in their life, may not want to go on to a four-year university, but know that they have to do something and would like to be gainfully employed.

Seguin added that an entry level position in industry will offer better pay and benefits than a lot of the other options out there, especially for someone just starting post high school life.

Electrical studies for trades, technical math, introduction to welding, advanced welding, hydraulic and pneumatic power, job search strategies and applied blueprint reading are some of the classes interested students will be expected to take in order to complete the program.

"We have a CAD [computer-aided design] class that will be 3-D," added Fox.

"Even the math classes will be as much hands on as we can possibly make them," he said. "We're equipping a test lab, basically, that will have all kinds of measuring equipment; for instance, an optical comparator, a coordinate measuring machine [and] a dynamic load frame, so we'll be able to do materials testing on that sort of thing." The math instructor, he added, will be able to access this as well, further reinforcing the academic aspect.

"All students are going to go through a safety program," he continued. "Every process that we

find work in a variety of fields, from welding to the automotive and aircraft industries.

"And this is a real good time because the aircraft industry is experiencing [somewhat] of a shift in the fleets right now. Their companies are buying the airplanes and getting rid of the old ones," said Fox.

"So places like Boeing, they're doing a lot of things with composites, other than building airplanes right now. They're building parts. The companies that are buying the old planes, such as Kalitta, they're modifying those airplanes to do something else with them, so that is heavily composite based. And that's just the aircraft industry," he pointed out.

"This is actually the perfect field for any entrepreneur that has a product they want to develop. This is just the most perfect, individual entrepreneur sort of thing that there is," Fox contends.

A new lab is being constructed on the campus, wherein the students will take part in the hands-on lessons, and it will be situated in a former classroom which is currently undergoing a number of renovations to properly accommodate the needs of the program.

"Our lab will have some pretty high-end composites equipment, including an autoclave," Fox shared.

He noted that, essentially, everything which will be available will be run by programmable logic controllers. "We have the ability to pretty much program everything that we're doing, so it really represents what is currently in manufacturing right now."

The new space will also be equipped with a drill press, metal cutting band saw, coordinate measuring machine, portable weld-

"I know, just in the composites part, we spent about \$150,000, I think," said Fox.

"We received \$2.5 million," said Seguin, who pointed out only a fraction of this will be needed for the industrial tech program, to cover such expenses as the equipment and laboratory construction. The rest will be dispersed for other course needs at ACC.

Fox said that staff is counting on and anticipating high participation in the new program.

"To evidence that, Alcona High School is sending a contingent of dual-enrolled students," said Seguin.

Those who are interested in the technology field will be bussed to the campus and, according to Seguin, it will take them four semesters to earn the certificate which, with the technical math I and II requirements, will suffice for the Michigan Merit Curriculum math portion.

"These students will not only graduate with their high school diploma, they will also have a college certificate, in addition, which, I think is huge," Seguin commented. "They can go right to work if they want to, right out of high school."

She said she is assuming, based on a preliminary guess, that there will be approximately 10 Alcona students initially taking part in the program and she hopes there will be more, also from other districts, in the future.

The work ethic and attention to detail is needed here, Fox said. "And those things, gained at an early age, are going to stay for the rest of a person's work life.

"We're also dealing with other schools and we'll eventually have classes that other schools will be participating in as well," said Fox.

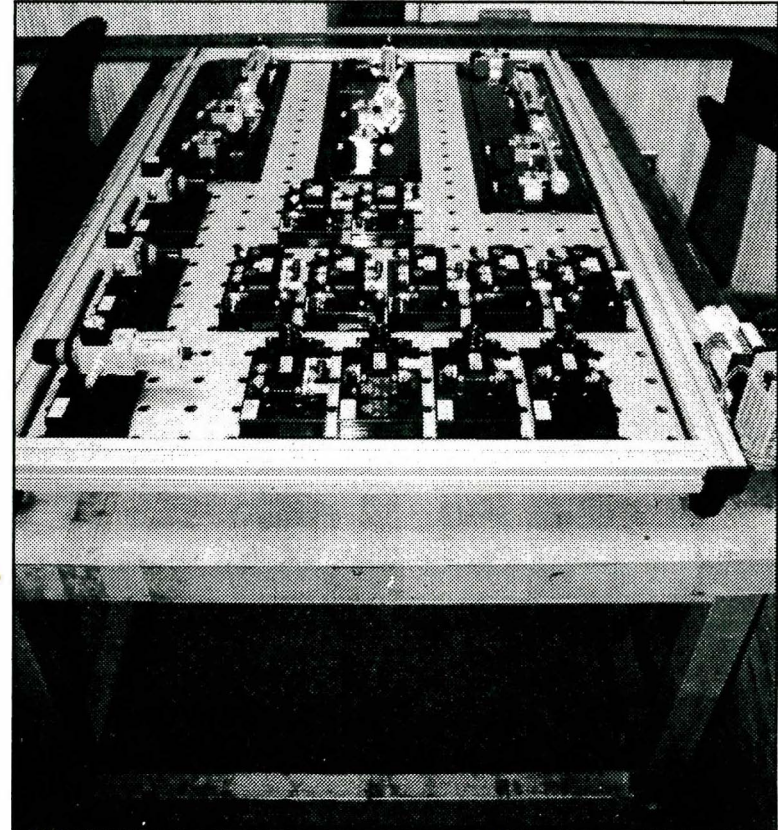


Photo by Jenny Haglund

HIGH TECH – This pneumatic trainer will be used for programming pneumatic or hydraulic circuits by students who enroll in the new industrial tech program at Alpena Community College. It is one of several pieces of high-end equipment to be featured in the classroom lab, which is currently being reconstructed to suit the needs of the program.

"They predominantly want to hire within the area – people that are used to this culture, because then they know they'll stay. The winters don't scare them off and the small town vibe doesn't scare them off; they like it, that's why they really want to hire from within the area," said Seguin. "That's why if we can get them skilled, this is a win-win for the employee,

semester, which is when the industrial tech program classes begin, will start on Wednesday, March 30 and last through the first week in August.

Registration will pick back up the week before school starts, which is Monday, Aug. 29, but Seguin urges those who will be seeking financial aid to begin their paperwork now.

continued. Every process that we cover will have associated safety, so that is a primary concern."

Fox said the manufacturing processes class is in curricular committee at the moment and a lab component will be added to the course which will not only cover a variety of the basics but, specifically, will emphasize processes and technologies in the local area which, at this point, means heavily composites.

"We will be doing different composites, forming and molding, but we'll do a huge amount of repairs as well, and that's what industry, locally, tells us that we need," said Fox.

With this type of certificate, a student could go on to employment in a number of fields, such as welding or computer numerical control (CNC) programming, which a host of different composites-related occupations will represent, including open and closed mold lay up.

"A composite is the combination of two materials that make the finished product better than either one individually. Generally it consists of a fiber of some sort and a matrix that holds it together; binds it together," Fox explained. "So when you think of fiber glass or epoxy resin composites, they start with some sort of a fiber and then the strength is added by binding those together with a resin of some sort.

"Boats are composites, airplanes are composites; technically, your car is a composite," he proceeded. "We think of composites as being usually a fiber glass resin and a cloth or epoxy resin composite, but there are a variety of other things as well."

To simplify, Seguin said, the large circular object which forms around a jet engine, for example, is a composite. "If that was broke and cracked, they would take that and this class would teach them how to fix it. You learn how to mold and work with the material."

In other words, a student could

suring machine, portable welding booths, two CNC machines, a compression molding press and work benches, complete with large screen monitors on the walls.

"We'll have a dynamic load frame, which is a very high tech piece of equipment," Fox said, adding that this even makes the Phoenix and Kalitta employees smile.

Several of the items are on site now, while staff is awaiting the delivery of the rest, some of which is being stored at the Alpena campus.

There will only be a few pieces of stationary equipment and the remainder will be on wheels, so much can be done in a somewhat limited space. The items can be pushed to one area of the classroom, when needed, or taken across the hall to a storage area.

"When this is all done it will be a modern, high tech lab," Fox assured.

And he will be bringing with him the credentials needed to teach in such an advanced facility.

"I am an insomniac with a workshop at home. I'm a hands-on person. I have some background in industry, including the auto industry [and] some construction," he shared.

"I do have experience in the classroom, about 14½ years total, both college and secondary," added Fox, who holds a bachelor's degree in technology education.

"Part of what makes me confident is the network of contacts that I've developed over time. I've learned from everybody, including my students. So I think that's what makes me qualified, before the degree," he said.

In order to fund the new endeavor, a grant was awarded to the school through the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training Grant Program, offered by the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration.

In addition to this, if students want to pursue greater goals, they can apply some of their experience toward obtaining an associate's degree. Because some of the classes which would already be completed, this would save the students money, in terms of the costs associated with each credit.

"If they went up to Alpena to finish another year they could get an associate's degree, in addition to the certificate," said Seguin.

So what does all this mean, in particular, for those living in and around Iosco County, especially those who wish to remain in the area?

"One thing that's really struck me is, I look at businesses here and these people tend to hang on to employees pretty well around here, for one thing. Another thing is, I live in West Branch – you don't find entry level jobs in manufacturing starting with the pay that they're paying here. It's \$3, \$4 or \$5 more an hour, usually, what they're paying starting employees," said Fox.

"And on top of that, places like Kalitta advance their own people," he said, recalling a recent visit to the facility, in which the tour guide pointed out an employee who started out in the painting room and is now running a CNC plasma cutter to cut engine seals.

"I really think that they take care of their employees, based on what I've seen," said Fox, of area industrial employers.

He said he met with a human resources worker at one local company who commended the new ACC program, saying it's a good thing this is happening, because the business was getting to the point where it needed to open its own school.

"Anecdotally, I'm hearing of all kinds of jobs in local companies," said Fox, adding that several manufacturing plants, for instance, are presently on the hunt for people with basic skills.

as well as for the employer."

She said the program will be great for the community and, especially with the economy being what it is, people looking for jobs have to be skilled.

"You have to have something; some type of paper or credentials behind you to get almost any sort of work," she stressed, noting that employers often hire those with some training or college courses under their belt ahead of those with no background.

Registration for the ACC fall

New enrollees must attend a student orientation, the details of which, along with other school information, can be found on the ACC website at www.alpenacc.edu.

The HUSH campus is located at 5800 Skeel Ave. and Fox, who said he would be more than willing to speak with prospective students, can be reached at 989-358-7441 or foxj@alpenacc.edu.

Charter Township of Oscoda Planning Commission PUBLIC NOTICE – PUBLIC HEARING

To the residents of the Charter Township of Oscoda:
Please be notified that there will be a public hearing of the **Planning Commission**, Charter Township of Oscoda, Iosco County, Michigan in the Township Board Room, 208 S. State Street, at **7:00 p.m., Monday, April 4, 2016.**

Nature of Public Hearing:

The Planning Commission has proposed a revision to Ordinance 165. This Public Hearing will include a reading of and action by the Board on the revision listed below:

Section 8.3.3 Variances

This applicable excerpt and revision of the Township Zoning Ordinance is available for public review in the office of the Zoning Administrator in the Township Hall, 110 S. State Street, Oscoda. Phone 989-739-9019.

Written comments concerning this revision may be sent to the Zoning Administrator, Charter Township of Oscoda, 110 S. State Street, Oscoda, MI 48750, or via e-mail at zoning@oscodatownshipmi.gov.

This notice is posted in compliance with the Open Meetings Act, Public Act 1976, as amended, MCL 41.72(2) and (4), and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The Oscoda Township Planning Commission will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for the meeting or public hearing upon five days notice to the Planning Commission.

Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Oscoda Township Zoning Administrator by writing or calling the following:

Zoning Department
Charter Township of Oscoda
110 S. State St.
Oscoda, MI 48750
989-739-9019