LOCAL NEWS

Industrial tech lab at Oscoda ACC campus nears completion

OSCODA – The industrial technology lab at the Huron Shores (HUSH) campus of Alpena Community College (ACC), located on the former Wurtsmith Air Force Base in Oscoda, is nearing completion.

An update on the progress was provided by Jon Fox, who will be instructing students enrolled in the updated industrial technology certificate program at HUSH, set to begin with the start of the fall semester.

The program has been in place for some time at the main campus of the school in Alpena, but this is the first technical program for the Oscoda branch. Thanks to the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training Grant Program, offered by the U.S. Department of Labor-Employment & Training Administration, a new lab is being constructed in a former classroom.

As of last week, Fox shared that conduit and electrical wiring were being installed to power the new equipment and upgrades were being implemented to the exhaust ducts, prior to installation of the ceiling.

"Air plumbing has also been installed which will connect to a new compressor located in the boiler room," he stated.

"So far the new welders and welding stations, as well as electrical, pneumatic and CNC [computer numerical control] trainers have been received," he continued. "The autoclave, dynamic load frame, compression molding press and optical comparator are ordered."

According to Fox, while more tools and supplies have yet to be purchased, staff hopes to have everything completed, installed, and/or operating by the end of June.

"In addition to the labs, curricula is under development. While most of our classes existed on main campus, we are working to revise some of the content to better integrate some of our new technology," Fox stated.

"In an effort to maximize lab time, several classes are being reformatted to allow the course content to be accessed by students via Blackboard," Fox explained. "Once a student signs up with ACC they are given an email account and access to Blackboard, Office 365 and Web Advisor. Assessments will be taken online and automatically graded and, through Blackboard Gradebook, students can see their cumulative grade in real time. If the model works well, we will use it for subsequent classes."

Fox shared that he is very proud of the no-nonsense, no fluff nature of the certificate program and that every bit of it is practical. "Classes will be intensely hands on; even the tech math class will be lab heavy, emphasizing application over theory."

According to Fox, "This program will be populated by recent graduates, adults who want refresh their skills, dual-enrolled high school students and even displaced workers looking for a new career path."

Additionally, even though classes won't begin until the fall, staff is seeking out job opportunities for students, as well as work based training, such as co-op, temporary projects, job shadowing and field trips.

The one-year program is designed to give students the basis for overall knowledge for 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.

"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 [Solutions], the composite shop at Kalitta [Air] and some of the other places," Fox has said.

He added that emphasis will be placed on processes and technologies specific to Oscoda and surrounding areas which, at this point, means heavily composites.

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

With this type of certificate, a student could go on to employment in a number of fields, such as welding, CNC programming and the automotive or aircraft industries.

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

He also shared that an open house will be held on Saturday, Aug. 13, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., to show off the new work space and equipment.

The event will feature technology demonstrations, a car show, games, food and more.

"That date corresponds with the annual fly-in at the Wurtsmith Air Museum, so activity in the neighborhood should be at a high level," he stated.

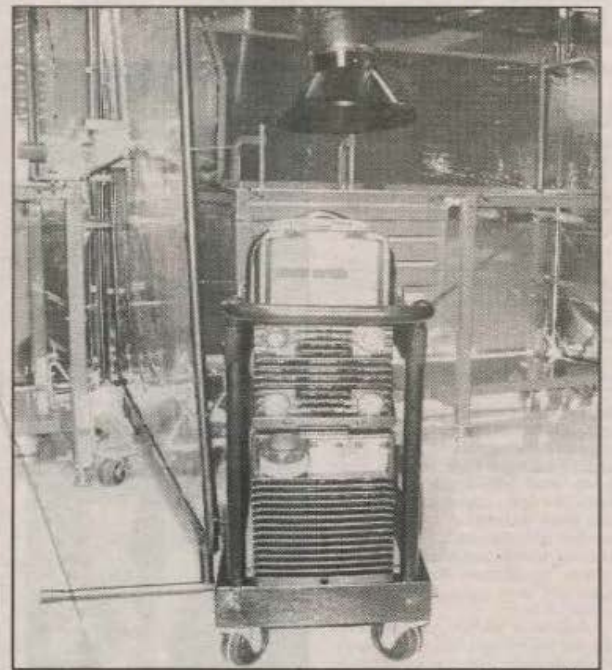
Early registration for 2016 fall classes at ACC is currently underway and will be ongoing through Friday, Aug. 5, which is also the due date for tuition.

Central registration will open from Tuesday, Aug. 23, through Thursday, Aug. 25, and tuition will be due by Friday, Aug. 26.

Classes begin on Monday, Aug. 29.

New enrollees are required to attend a mandatory orientation and more information is available by calling the campus office at 358-7295 or 739-1445, extension 7295. Further details can also be found on the ACC website at *www.alpenacc.edu*.

The HUSH campus is located at 5800 Skeel Ave. and, for those interested in the industrial tech program, Fox can be reached at 358-7441 or *foxj@alpenacc.edu*.



Courtesy photo

RENOVATIONS – A former classroom in the Oscoda campus of Alpena Community College is being converted into a modern lab for the new industrial technology certificate program, classes for which will begin this fall semester. Welders, benches and portable booths provide a very nice workspace while giving the ability to reconfigure the space quickly for larger projects or purposes other than welding, shared instructor Jon Fox.