



Iosco County News-Herald and Oscoda Press

SECTION C
November 16, 2016



ACC president shares recent successes of Oscoda campus

by Jenny Haglund

OSCODA – The opportunities available to students at the Huron Shores (HUSH) campus of Alpena Community College (ACC) in Oscoda continue to flourish, with ACC President Dr. Don MacMaster offering an update on the success of some newly implemented programs at the school.

MacMaster, on Nov. 10, provided this reporter with a tour of the recently established industrial technology lab, at which time dual enrolled students from Alcona High School were attending welding class.

In addition to welding, students working toward this certificate must take such classes as electrical studies for trades, technical math, hydraulic and pneumatic power, job search strategies and applied blue print reading.

While the main campus of ACC in Alpena has featured the program for some time, this is the first technical certificate offering at the Oscoda campus, and instructor Jon Fox said he is pleased thus far with the turnout for the program, which initiated this fall semester.

MacMaster said the Alcona students come to HUSH twice a week for classes and he is thrilled that such a program is now being offered to young people.

Dual enrolled students aren't the only ones who can benefit, as Fox has noted that the program can be useful to recent graduates, adults who want refresh their

work is an art form and a rather marketable skill throughout north-east Michigan.

In fact, the entire premise of the certificate places emphasis on training local students who can advance their careers right within the county.

The program is designed to give students the basis for overall knowledge for employment into entry level positions in industry and manufacturing. The courses are centered on obtaining a basic knowledge of a variety of necessary skills to attain and maintain employment in today's industrial workforce.

Fox has stated that the goal is to cater to local industry, as far as representing their processes and their manufacturing techniques, so much of what is seen in the tech lab reflects what is on the manufacturing floors at such businesses as Phoenix Composite Solutions (PCS) and Kalitta Air.

This means a lot of high tech equipment has been brought to HUSH, including welders and welding stations; electrical, pneumatic and computer numerical control (CNC) trainers; an autoclave; a dynamic load frame; a compression molding press; a 3-D printer; an optical comparator; a pedestal grinder; a compression molding press, which provides practical thermal plastic molding capability; electrical trainers to aid students in building circuits; and more.

MacMaster said the school has

Iosco County.

"The more folks we can get in the program, the better off we are and the better program we can have," augmented Ed Howe, welding paraprofessional at HUSH.

So far things have gotten off to a good start, according to Fox, who noted that HUSH is in early negotiations with PCS to cover some of their airframe and power plant mechanic requirements needed for licensing.

If things go as planned, students will be doing actual, hands-on airplane work in a hangar on the former air base.

As Fox has explained in the past, those who obtain the industrial tech certificate can go on to employment in a number of fields, such as welding, CNC programming and the automotive or aircraft industries. Graduates will be exposed to a wide range of technology, which will aid them in gaining employment, choosing a career specialty or even developing their own products.

Questions specific to the industrial tech program may be directed to Fox by calling 358-7441 or sending an email to foxj@alpenacc.edu.

Located just down the hall from the lab is a classroom dedicated to students from the Alternative Educational Academy of Iosco County.

MacMaster said this is another noteworthy addition to the campus, with the academy having established the site in Oscoda at the



Photo by Jenny Haglund

ENHANCEMENTS INSIDE AND OUT – Dr. Don MacMaster, president of Alpena Community College, stands near the entrance of the school's campus in Oscoda, where he provided an update on some of the newly implemented programs. In addition to course enhancements, the property now boasts a more attractive appeal, with the planting of Norway maple trees along the walkway, donated by MacMaster, one of which he is photographed next to in this shot.



skills or displaced workers looking for a new career path.

Through the program, students can receive their certification in just one year, enabling them to enter the workforce right away.

"This is just a great addition to the Huron Shores campus," MacMaster expressed. "Providing students the vehicle to learn these skills at the HUSH branch is a major step forward for the campus."

As for the welding component, in particular, he said this type of

already procured all of the necessary large equipment. A few smaller items may need to be ordered in the future, simply to complement or support what already exists.

MacMaster and Fox each agree that enrollment in the program for the inaugural year is at a positive level. MacMaster said it has been great having the participation from those at Alcona High School, but ACC is trying to get the word out to bring in more students from

start of the current school year.

Elizabeth Thompson, a teacher mentor for the academy, who is working on her degree in special education, offered a peek into the classroom, and she was joined by social worker Meredith Moore.

"The local four school districts went to IRESA [Iosco Regional Educational Services Agency] and had us chartered. So we work in cooperation with the local four," Thompson explained. "It's a cooperative charter school – it's not a competitive situation."

She said the academy works with students who do better outside of the traditional, common classroom environment.

Those from the academy were looking to set up a site near the Oscoda area, since they have a lot of students from the municipality,

See HUSH, Page 2C



Photo by Jenny Haglund

NEW FACES – Social worker Meredith Moore, left, and Elizabeth Thompson, a teacher mentor, work for the Alternative Educational Academy of Iosco County. The academy has established a site in Oscoda at the Huron Shores campus of Alpena Community College.



Photo by Jenny Haglund

FINISHING THE DETAILS – The industrial technology certificate program, new to the Oscoda campus this year, requires participants to take a series of welding classes. Dual enrolled students from Alcona High School are almost finished with their Halloween themed headless horseman creation and are, from left, Jared Sager, Cody Schram and Raymond Betz.



Photo by Jenny Haglund

FROM SCHOOL TO WORK – Welding paraprofessional Ed Howe, left, works with a student in the new industrial technology lab of the Oscoda campus of Alpena Community College. The area features state-of-the-art equipment and technology, aimed to provide students with the training necessary to gain employment in the fields of industry and manufacturing.

HUSH

Continued from Page 1C

as well as Mikado and Greenbush.

While on the hunt for the proper location, Thompson said MacMaster and Nancy Seguin, dean of students at ACC, stepped up and suggested the HUSH campus as a possible venue.

"We looked at multiple locations. We want our students to see that college is accessible and attainable," said Thompson, noting that, by operating from ACC, students can see that it's possible for them to go to college and it's not as scary as they may have thought it was at one point.

Thompson said staff are trying to open up options for these students, and ACC has assisted with this through such actions as inviting academy students to take part in various activities and functions through the college. "They're very supportive of us." Dual enrollment is also available to the students.

"It has been a wonderful, cooperative arrangement," Thompson asserted, adding that everyone has gotten involved to help ease the transitions associated with the inclusion of the academy at HUSH. "I think it's gone very,

very smoothly."

For more information about the Alternative Educational Academy of Iosco County, call 739-5878.

In addition to these developments, MacMaster said an ACC scholarship is in the works to honor the late George Falkenhagen, a longtime Oscoda resident who passed away on Oct. 20.

According to MacMaster, Falkenhagen made a career as a teacher at Oscoda Area Schools (OAS), and was also an instructor at the HUSH campus, where he served for a time as the director.

Falkenhagen, a former OAS Board of Education member, was referred to as a "wonderful guy" by MacMaster. "He had his heart in Iosco County and the students and people who live here."

MacMaster said ACC would like to honor Falkenhagen, who was a champion for HUSH and the children of Iosco County, in addition to being a good, supportive friend.

More details will be forthcoming as the scholarship develops.

MacMaster concluded his HUSH progress report with a

quick walk around the entryway of the building.

Aside from the internal happenings, the aesthetics of the school have also received an upgrade, thanks to the planting of six Norway maple trees, which line the walkway to the building.

MacMaster donated the 11-year-old trees, which were planted at the school the prior week, in order to spruce up the area and provide a more welcoming atmosphere.

For more information about HUSH and its programs, visit www.alpenacc.edu or call 739-1445. The Oscoda campus is located at 5800 Skeel Ave.

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