

Partners for Progress in Delta, Inc.

Alaska Works Partnership ♦ Cooperative Extension Service ♦ Delta/Greely School District
University of Alaska Fairbanks Community and Technical College

March 25, 2013

Representative Mark Neuman
State Capitol, Room 513
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Neuman:

On behalf of the board of directors of Partners for Progress in Delta, Inc, I am writing in support of extending the sunset date for funding of Regional Training Centers through the program for Technical and Vocational Education Program (TVEP). Current funding is due to sunset June 2014. It is our understanding that your bill, HB 150, would extend the sunset date to 2024. Partners for Progress in Delta, Inc., a consortium of educational partners working together since 2003, is a state-recognized Regional Training Center committed to career advancement through education and training to develop Alaska's skilled workforce. Your support in sponsoring this bill is deeply appreciated.

A sunset date of June 2014 makes it difficult for our board to plan for the coming year. For us specifically in Delta Junction, if we commit to classes and training that we would like to offer at the Delta Career Advancement Center for the summer of 2014, but then learn next spring that funding will not be continued, we have little recourse since we are dependent on TVEP funding for our operation. We either severely scale back programs until we find additional support or perhaps even dissolve the consortium.

Furthermore, the timing of sunset in 2014 comes when we are looking to expand our operation with the construction of a building expansion to meet growing area needs for education and training. We are a small operation but have focused on quality and community needs as they relate to career advancement and workforce development needs of the state. Many describe us as a model for the state.

Our mission is to: *Make area youth and adults competitive for emerging jobs to help build Alaska's workforce.*

Since 2003 our educational partners have accomplished the following:

- Begin Construction Trades program at the high school. *100 + high school students to date*
- Build a facility in which partners deliver education and training programs for workforce development. The Delta Career Advancement Center opened in 2005.
- Hold first Industry Roundtable in 2005. We held our eighth Industry Roundtable in October 2012 to update our supporters and discuss with them their needs for future training and education.
- Kickoff in 2006 an intensive summer Intro to Heavy Equipment Operator Academy. *80+ Participants to date*
- Incorporate as Partners for Progress in Delta, Inc. in 2007 as a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit.
- Recognized by the State of Alaska as a Regional Training Center in 2008.
- Deliver for-credit and non-credit classes reaching 400+ students.

Our founding partners—Alaska Works Partnership, Delta/Greely School District, University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service and UAF Community and Technical College deliver a

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A consortium of educational partners operating the **Delta Career Advancement Center** to train, educate and build Alaska's workforce

range of workshops, testing services and classes for credit and non-credit skills building classes as well as certification opportunities at the Delta Career Advancement Center.

In addition, our annual summer academy has become life changing for many. Since 2006, more than 75 young adults have been introduced to the safe operation of heavy equipment through our **Introduction to Entry Level Heavy Equipment Operator Intensive Summer Academy**. Partners for Progress in Delta offers this academy each June in cooperation with one of the consortium's founding partners, Alaska Works Partnership, and the Operating Engineers Local 302 and its Training Trust.

Since 2006, we have had 20 apprenticeship placements resulting from the summer academy and high school Construction Trades classes; the 20th was just accepted by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) as a direct indenture from the Construction Trades high school program, and he will be recognized at the May 2013 high school graduation.

Of these 20 placements, many were youth who previously had not thought about their future and how they might fit into the workforce. Not all plan to attend college right after high school.

- In one instance a bank teller left her position to become a heavy equipment operator who is earning a good wage working throughout the state.
- In another instance someone who took the high school sequence is pursuing a career in the U.S. Coast Guard as a journeyman electrician.
- Yet another academy participant is working on a civil engineering degree at UAF—he wanted to understand what it meant to move dirt so he could be a better engineer.
- One success story is that of the high school student who took the high school Construction Trades classes, participated in the summer academy, was accepted into an IBEW apprenticeship, is now a journeyman and currently is working on a college degree by taking classes at the Delta Career Advancement Center.

We survey all of our participants annually and many tell us they appreciate the “hands-on experience and the opportunities to learn to get a well-paying job.” Additional comments include statements such as the following:

- “It was very helpful in teaching me how to operate equipment the correct way...it was a great experience.”
- “This center helps students find their career. People here have connections with employers.”
- “I learned, practiced a lot.”
- “I learned how important a good work ethic is on any job.”
- “It made me realize what I wanted to do.”

In 2012 and for 2013 as well, emphasis will be directed toward both heavy equipment operation and heavy equipment mechanic training. Importantly, the academy has had tremendous support from the City, local businesses and the Delta Fair Association. We hope to have the 2012 academy students work this summer with a local contractor who is building the new Senior Care Center in Delta. Academy participants have the opportunity to operate each of the pieces of equipment used during the hands-on two-week portion of the program including a dozer, grader, excavator, water truck, backhoe, compactor, and end dump. The three-week academy results in 20-hour MSHA, Forklift operator, First Aid/CPR/AED training and certifications.

Below is a sampling of classes offered as needed and as demand warrants—for credit and not-for-credit through UAF Community and Technical College:

- Arctic Engineering, (graduate level) was video conferenced from the main UAF campus
- Birds of Alaska
- Certified Nurse Aide course through a combination of in-person instruction at the Center, videoconferencing and hands-on training in Fairbanks.
- Computer Business Applications (Microsoft Word, and Microsoft Excel)
- Developmental Math
- Digital Photography
- EMT II
- English 111
- Fundamentals of Oral Communication
- Information Technology (distanced delivered from Nome)
- Introductory Russian
- One student joined the Cisco Networking Academy training twice weekly in our facility. Another student took a distance delivered Communications class via video conferencing throughout the semester.
- Private Pilot Ground School
- Quick Books
- Small Business Marketing
- Welding I and Welding II
- Graduate student working on a master's degree in Natural Resources Management took a class vis-à-vis video conferencing at the Center
- Computer Business Applications: Microsoft Word and Excel
- Alaska Works Partnership offered two Weatherization classes

In addition we offer a number of workshops on a variety of topics to build skills for employment.

- Archaeological Fieldwork—an introductory class aimed at building entry level skills for work on archaeological digs—developed in cooperation with the U.S. Army Garrison—Fort Wainwright.
- CDL Prep Class and a CDL 10-hour intensive driving class with testing at the end. Worked with the Center for Employment Education to offer a pilot 10-hour Commercial Drivers' License (CDL) driver training and testing in Delta July 16-20, 2012. Of eight applicants four were interviewed and selected for this pilot training. Three of the four earned their license.
- Certiport
- Culinary Arts classes
- Drinking Water for Emergencies—developed to meet the needs of the Alaska State Defense Force, a 16-hour workshop aimed at training for decontaminating water in the event of disasters
- English as a Second Language workshop
- Heating Efficiently with Oil (Systems and Controls)—a CEU course for operating oil burners offered in cooperation with the Alaska Science Building Network
- ServSafe for food handler certification

One of our partners, Cooperative Extension Service (CES), increased its use of the Center with a series of videoconference classes, workshops and discussions. The local CES 4H program depends on the Delta Career Advancement as a place for its meetings.

- Alaska Residential Building
- DOT Trucking Regulations
- Solar Energy for Alaskans
- A required pesticide applicator class was delivered from Delta at the Center via videoconference to link with Anchorage, Kodiak, Juneau, and Fairbanks.
- Workshops on "Raising Chickens" and "Raising Fruits" were delivered from Fairbanks to the Center for local participation.
- Introduction to Specialty Food, Business, Family Child Care, as well as several sessions commemorating the 150th anniversary of the land-grant 1862 Morrill Act, were available through videoconferencing.

Our Delta/Greely School District partner uses the facility throughout the year for delivery of many of its career and technical education classes. In addition, the Delta Career Advancement Center has been the hub of the Delta High School Career Day programs for several years, including the fall 2012 daylong "Women in the Trades" focus. The Delta Career Advancement Center also serves as an important site for testing for appropriate placement in classes with Accuplacer testing, Center for Distance Education (CDE) testing, and the ACT tests offered throughout the year as the Center is now listed as a testing site.

In 2012 our Center headcount for classes for university credit, workshops, specialized training and testing at the Delta Career Advancement Center (DCAC) totaled 417 students. That's up from the 2011 total of 248.

As required by the Department of Labor and Workforce Development we annually survey our students and area employers. We heard 97% of student respondents to our annual survey say they would take another class or recommend others to take a class at this center. In 2012, more employers than ever responded to the survey and they believe we are providing quality training.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Student Response rate</u>	<u>Employer Response rate</u>
2012	100%	69%
2011	53%	58%
2010	33%	31%
2009	27%	46%

In 2012, employers told us the following:

- 92% of employees who took classes still work for the organization.
- 68% of those who responded are very satisfied and 28% satisfied with overall skills of employees who take classes.
- 84% are very satisfied with the work ethic of employees hired who took classes at the Delta Career Advancement Center.

In 2012 area employers identified the following classes as important to offer in the future:

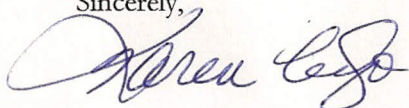
- GIS
- AutoCAD

- How to Teach Math
- Noncertified X-ray technician
- EMT II
- ESL more simplified
- Network Plus, Security Plus (8750 certificate training)
- Computer-related training
- Equipment safety for youth under 16
- Pedagogy and phlebotomy

At a February 2013 Delta Junction Chamber of Commerce Meeting we shared our vision for the expansion and attendees were asked if they supported us. We heard an enthusiastic "yes." For this reason the board is committed to working with the community to continue to offer a range of classes and training that can make a difference for the residents of our region. Continued TVEP funding is critical to this effort.

Please let us know what additional information you might need. Again we appreciate your sponsorship of this bill and support of workforce development efforts underway across the state.

Sincerely,



Karen Cedzo

Partner Coordination and Development, Partners for Progress in Delta, Inc.

Board Members

Mary Leith, *President, Delta Junction City Council*

Randy Cheap, *Vice President and Secretary, Alaska Works Partnership*

Jon Dufendach, *Treasurer, Camp Water Industries*

Fred Schlutt, *Cooperative Extension Service*

Michele Stalder, *UAF Community and Technical College*

Eric Stewart, *Copper Current Electric*

Duncan Ware, *Delta/Greely School District*

CC

The Honorable Representative Mike Chenault, Speaker of the House

The Honorable Senator Charlie Huggins, Senate President

Representative Kurt Olson, Chairman House Labor and Commerce

Representative Bill Stoltze, Co-Chairman House Finance

Representative Alan Austerman, Co-Chairman House Finance

Dianne Blumer, Commissioner Department of Labor and Workforce Development

Representative Eric Feige

Senator Click Bishop

Senator John Coghill