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Aviation Academy simulator lab gets upgrade

The DeKalb County Economic Development Corp., through a grant from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, recently teamed with Kishwaukee Education Consortium and Kishwaukee College to upgrade its Aviation Academy simulator lab.

"Through this partnership with DCEO, KEC and Kishwaukee College, we were pleased to link the business community with a top-notch vocational education program that helps students prepare for technology careers in aviation," DCEDC executive director Paul Borek said in a news release.

Grant funds allowed for the purchase of an elite training device equipped with a Garmin 1000 Avionics simulator, including a Cessna 172 fiberglass cockpit. The equipment was added to the Aviation Academy at DeKalb Taylor Municipal Airport that serves 45 juniors and seniors in area high schools and 25 post-secondary Kishwaukee College students.

In this program the students, working with mentors and instructors, learn first-hand about aviation careers. Work-based activities, which include job shadowing experiences and internships, coupled with classroom instruction allow for coordination of this advanced technology training. Additionally airline pilots and flight instructors from local flight schools have been introduced to the G1000 simulator and volunteer their time to orient the students to this equipment.

"It is valuable to strengthen KEC's curriculum with state-of-the-art equipment to inspire student learning and career development," KEC executive director Kathy Watkins said in the release. "With the support of DCEO and private contributions, we have been able to develop one of the premier high school/college aviation programs in the U.S."

Other supporters of the grant included the Chicago Area Business Aviation Association; Young Wings with Vision; city of DeKalb; DeKalb airport board members; Illinois Department of Aviation Director Susan Shea; state Sen. Brad Burzynski; Mark Jackson, chief pilot at Boeing; and Alan Klapmeier, CEO of Cirrus Aircraft Corp.

DCEDC is a public/private partnership working to facilitate sustainable and diversified economic growth within DeKalb County.



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