

Name this paper

See Contest Rules Below

Alpena Community College

ACC opens door to new career opportunities .

JOCELYN HASKE
Managing Editor

The closing of Fletcher Paper Company has forced former employees to seek new careers. Aware of the emergency situation, Alpena Community College took action.

Don McMaster, Director of Workplace Development, talked with employers and found a level of interest in the CDL (commercial drivers license) program. Responding to their request, ACC started a CDL course.

The two part commercial drivers license program includes passing both a written exam and a driving test. McMaster instructed three, one day sessions to prepare participants for the knowledge portion. About 60 Fletcher employees, approximately 40 percent of their hourly workforce, are currently

receiving training.

When McMaster started at ACC, his first teaching job was at Fletcher Paper Mill.

"A lot of the guys I'm seeing, I had eight years ago in class. It's sweet and also kind of bittersweet because the plant in the past was a thriving operation," he said.

Paul Wegmeyer, owner and test examiner of Wolf Creek Driver Testing, helped answer questions and gave a broad overview of the CDL program.

According to Board of Trustee member Wegmeyer, it looks very promising over the next five to ten years. The average age of most over-the-road truck drivers is in the mid to upper fifties, many of whom are preparing for retirement. The industry is "desperately looking" for responsible men and women who can care for the equipment, maintain a level head under tense situations, and make good decisions.

"This may be a stepping stone into another career," said Wegmeyer. "It might not be what they're going into, but it may provide a side or supplemental income to help them get through the next year."

"Locally, this is a good time for these people to prepare themselves for getting a license,"



said Wagmeyer.

Once spring arrives, the construction industry will start back up again and many local employers will be looking for CDL drivers to fill seasonal work.

"In five to six weeks, we'll really see a gate open up. The timing is perfect because they'll be ready when the season begins", he said.

According to Wagmeyer, it can be expensive to get into the industry, especially for those with very little experience. The help of the state agency, Michigan Works, is a "huge break through for the employers". Based on a

voucher system, they must be admitted in the agency's system to receive assistance.

The three sessions of classroom training have been completed. Participants are currently taking the written knowledge test at the Secretary of State's office. From those who have taken it, Wagmeyer has heard that the training was helpful and the pass rate quite high.

"This is a very short, kind of thrown together program. We're making adjustments and working on things as they arise. If we can be of help and perhaps open a

door for them to consider, it just adds another tool to their tool case of skills and abilities that will make a marketable work place," he said.

Fletcher Paper has submitted a petition for TRA (Trade Readjustment Act) designation. In other words, if the company can demonstrate that foreign competition was a factor in its closing, federal funds may be available.

At this time, former employees have 26 weeks of unemployment and limited training

Photo by Jocelyn Haske

opportunities. If the TRA designation comes through, however, they will have a year and a half of unemployment and two years of paid training.

"This is a huge factor," says McMaster. "Nearly 190 people would have the opportunity to have retraining in a different career path. It would make a big benefit in their lives right now."

According to McMaster, Representative Stupak and Senator North offices are watching over the designation and results should come in by the first of March or April.

Board approves new three year faculty contract

Press Release:

The Alpena Community College Board of Trustees approved a tentative contract which was ratified by the college Faculty Council. The action puts in place the successor to the current agreement which expires August 27.

The new three-year contract between the 54-member full-time faculty unit and ACC will expire Aug. 15, 2004. Meetings were held over the past several months, and discussions leading to the pact were both intense and positive, according to Frank McCourt, president of the Alpena Community College Faculty Council, and Dr. Donald L. Newport, college president. They described the resulting agreement as reasonable and fair for all parties.

The contract includes a three percent increase to the salary schedules in each year of the contract. Other changes include a higher prescription drug co-payment and reduction from four steps to three steps in the grievance process. The contract also establishes the academic semester calendar through the 2003-04 school year.

"Having a multi-year agreement in place allows all of us to very clearly devote our energy to continuing to deliver a quality educational experience for our students and community," Newport said.

"Our mutual commitment to getting on with educating our students brought these meetings to a successful conclusion," said McCourt, "and we all look forward to the next three years of progress at the college."

SNEAK PEEK

How could we forget the king
Page 2

WCCT brings Alpena to cutting edge
Page 3

Adventures with Clute
Page 5

Inside look at ACC player: Justin Chapman
Page 7

Meet the Lady Lumberjacks
Page 8

Tim McGraw takes on Marilyn Manson
Page 9

New Creative Section: Showcase
Page 10,11

Meet 2001 Polemic staff
Page 12

ACC campus in store for big changes

ALICIA WELLS
Staff Writer

Alpena Community College has set many goals to try to improve all areas of the college campus. These goals are not only expensive, but may or may not affect you as the students and staff of ACC.

Among these goals is the idea to shut down ACC's East Campus. The fine arts classes would then be moved to the Graphic Arts building after an expansion, or to the vacated Concrete Technology area. ACC Vice-President of Administration and Finances, Richard Sutherland, said this would create less hassle with the classes closer to all other buildings. It would also bring in more people to visit and view the artwork.

An expansion in Besser Technology Center is also on the wish list. The idea is to put a consolidated computer technology area at the center of campus. This is expected to be more accessible and allow more flexibility on lab times for instructors and students.

The Natural Resource Center could use an upgrade in technology and equipment for the science labs. A new fire alarm system is also needed.

"Ours is functional, but it is 40 plus year old technology," said Sutherland. The new system would have flashing lights in each classroom and office for the hearing impaired. Other areas being considered for remodeling are the student lounges, learning center, and the roofing of buildings.

"There are a lot of things that we've looked at," said Sutherland, "but the overall general maintenance of the college is in decent shape."

Although these changes would improve many areas of campus, it isn't cheap. The architects came to a \$10.65 million estimate on the work the college wants done. This estimate is then put to the state. It is up to the state to decide how much the college will receive.

"There is no guarantee, but if we don't ask... we don't get," Sutherland said.

The rest of the money is for the college to raise by millage, donations, or a combination of both. The decisions made are ultimately up to the Board of Trustees, but with a lot of input.

"The students themselves

would be quizzed at the instructor level," said Sutherland. A lot of input is needed from the people who use the facilities to find out what is wanted and needed for improvement. It is important to create the best scenario for all classes.

"When we have an idea of what we can get, then its time to get down and map it out and get everyone talking," said Sutherland.

Overall the maintenance of a college is a very thorough process. Students who use computer labs, attend classes at East Campus or have any other ideas on ACC's goals should let instructors and administrators know. It is important that all voices are heard.

NAME THIS PAPER CONTEST

The ACC Student Press is looking for a new name. Submit your best idea.

\$500 cash prize awarded for best name

All students and faculty eligible

\$50

Send submissions to
Polemic office
BTC 106

If you would like to keep the name Polemic, please submit it.