

Severe shortage of qualified aircraft engineers

The Northwestern Ontario Air Carrier's Association (NWOACA) and Approved Maintenance Operators (AMO) are experiencing a severe shortage of qualified personnel to meet the industry's requirements.

Brad Greaves, NWOACA president, described the Association as, "a group of licenced air carriers from Wawa to the Manitoba border, whose primary purpose is to promote professionalism among its members, as well as to act as a lobby force in dealing with government, and within our own industry," he stated.

Referring to a resolution passed at the Association's last meeting, Greaves stated, "there is an expressed commitment of the NWOACA to working with government to alleviate the shortage crisis for both aircraft maintenance and pilots."

"AMOs are long established businesses in Northwestern Ontario, providing maintenance service to the aircraft industry."

Greaves said the shortage is not new to the industry.

According to Transport Canada statistics:

* of the 9,000 engineers now licenced in Canada, 822 licences

were issued during 1988

* of the total licenced engineers, 2,600 reside in Ontario

* of the total in Ontario, 186 live in Northwestern Ontario, many of whom are no longer active in the industry

* training institutions have an approximate 380 seats in all of Canada, but graduates are not yet licenced engineers (as they must undergo an apprenticeship); this is compared with the industry demand for an estimated 1,000 seats per year

* by 1997, the industry nationally, will require approximately 10,000 more licenced engineers than presently exist

"The eroding pool of new entries to this occupation, combined with the lack of an appropriate apprenticeship program, has contributed to the crisis now facing the industry," commented Greaves.

As of April 1, the occupation of Aircraft Maintenance Engineer/Apprentice was designated as a skills shortage in

Ontario.

This enables access by the industry to training subsidies for apprentices and upgrading of existing employees.

Hi-tech education in the classroom

Provincial allocation for school boards for the purchase of grant-eligible microcomputers will total \$71.1 million in 1989, Education Minister Chris Ward has announced.

The boards may use this money to buy grant-eligible microcomputers, specialized equipment, high-tech products and to improve teacher computer training in 1989, the Minister said.

"These funds will enable boards to significantly increase their supply of classroom computers, apply them more effectively to specific classroom needs, and provide more computer time for each child," Ward said.

Boards are permitted to choose from a broader range of computer manufacturers, whose computers have been approved for use in Ontario schools after meeting a new set of specifications.

Significant policy changes announced by the Minister in July, 1988, have provided school boards with the ability to significantly increase their computer purchasing power.

Boards are now allowed to use a portion of their allocations to buy a second category of educa-

tional microcomputers offering lower base prices, yet capable of serving specific needs in the classroom.

In addition, boards are permitted to use a portion of their computer funds for the purchase of specialized equipment that can better serve the needs of exceptional pupils and the unique training needs of students enrolled in technological courses.

A portion of the funds may also be applied toward the purchase of high tech equipment, such as CAD/CAM and robotics.

Also open to boards is the option of spending a portion of their allocations on in-service training for teachers on the use of computer technology in the classroom.

"Our policy changes enable boards to spend this year's allocations with greater effectiveness, obtaining better value for money," Ward said.

"These improvements will help schools deliver on our objective of promoting the knowledge

and skills of our children to ensure they leave school confident in their ability to live and work in a world filled with information technology."

Residents receive education through local NITC program

Eleven area residents will have greater employment opportunities available to them when they complete training programs currently underway.

These residents have gone back to school to take training arranged for them by the North Shore Industrial Training Committee with funding from Employment and Immigration Canada.

Marathon resident Arlene Clark started a 480 hour full-time Parts Clerk Training Program offered through Confederation College in Thunder Bay on January 23, 1989. She graduates May 12.

Seven Terrace Bay/Schreiber residents started an 80 hour part-time Cooking program in Terrace Bay on February 20, 1989. The program addresses a skill shortage need and will better prepare the students for employment opportunities in local hospitals, catering and restaurant establishments.

The students - Dorothy Kenney, Mary Madge, Marlene Klein, Mary Deschatelets, Sandra Mulligan, Alexandria Jacques and Noor Siddiqui also graduate in May. Training has been taking place in facilities of the Lake Superior High School in Terrace Bay.

Three students started another skill shortage training program - Heating/Refrigeration/Air Conditioning Mechanic Training April 3 through Confederation College in Thunder Bay. Richard Slawson from Terrace Bay, Jamie Figliomeni from Schreiber and Sean Mykula from Geraldton complete their training in this 52 week full-time program in March 1990.

The North Shore Industrial Training Committee is a non-profit organization comprised of volunteers from business, industry, labour, education and government who assess training needs in the North Shore of Superior area, promote skilled trades training and access training program fund-

ing from both Federal - Employment and Immigration

Canada - and Provincial - Ministry of Skills Development sources.

Training program priorities for 1989/90 will be announced in the near future.

For more information on the Committee and its program and activities contact the Chairman or Co-ordinator at Box 1780 Marathon, Ontario P0T 2E0 or 807-229-0569.

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