Alpena Community College Foundation
Electrical Power Technology Center
“Building a Powerful Future” Campaign

Case for Support

Background

When founded in 1952 as part of the Alpena K-14 system, Alpena Community College offered individuals who never before dreamed of an education beyond high school an opportunity to improve their lives. Post-secondary education became geographically accessible and affordable.

ACC is the higher education provider for Northeast Lower Michigan, serving Alpena, Presque Isle, Montmorency, Alcona and Iosco counties. The College offers a comprehensive blend of transfer and occupational programs and students can earn associate degrees in arts and science, as well as certificates in more than 70 programs.

ACC celebrates its 60th anniversary in 2012. Throughout its history, ACC has awarded more than 13,500 degrees. Thousands more have benefited from the school’s unique learning opportunities, including liberal arts transfer degree programs for the university-bound, occupational skills for the career-minded, and specialized training programs for business and industry.

Sixty years later the College has remained focused on its mission and continues its commitment to quality educational opportunities and furthering partnerships within the region.

As a strong and vibrant institution, the College is proud of its place as the higher education leader in Northeast Michigan. In the past three years, ACC has led Michigan community colleges in graduation rates.

The remarkable development of the College over the past 60 years is a tribute to a dedicated faculty, staff and administrators, combined with support from the elected officials, business owners and citizens of its service area.

The continued success of the College requires that it anticipates and responds to its constituents by providing a robust curriculum, needed services, workplace training and cultural programs.
The Challenge

Future trends indicate that there will be a significant lack of qualified workers to replenish the workforce in all sectors of the energy industry. This is due to the surge of retirements as the baby boomers leave the workforce not only in Michigan’s electric companies and utilities, but across the nation as well.

ACC’s Utility Technician program was started in 1990. The College had been approached by Alpena Power Company, Edison Sault Electric and the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association to start a program to meet the growing need for entry-level electric line installers. A one-year certificate program was developed and Charles Scheuffler, an employee of Alpena Power Company and part-time ACC instructor, was hired to lead the program.

The College has a 22-year history of not only preparing students for great careers, but delivering highly-skilled employees to the electrical utility industry. Today, the UTT program offers students two options: a one-year vocational certificate, or a 2-year Associate in Applied Science degree. The program is designed to prepare men and women to construct, install and repair electrical distribution, telephone and CATV transmission systems.

Currently, each of the three UTT full-time instructors has worked in the field, providing valuable insight and experience to students. The students in ACC’s UTT program get real-life, hands-on experience.

Due to the high demand for its utility technology programs, and with industry’s strong record of hiring its graduates, the program fills quickly and there is a waiting list of applicants. Unfortunately, ACC is forced to turn away qualified individuals each year because the current facility lacks lab space and is inadequate to support new programs.

Building on its success, ACC is poised to transform its Utility Technician and Electrical Apprentice programs into a comprehensive set of offerings which will better serve Michigan’s growing electrical power demands.

The Plan to Meet the Challenge

To meet the needs of its students and industry partners, ACC plans to renovate and expand the World Center for Concrete Technology to construct the Electrical Power Technology Center, placing two flagship technical programs side by side.
The 21,000 square foot expansion and renovation project will encompass three classrooms, two technical labs, faculty offices, and bays for heavy equipment. In addition, the expansion will include an indoor high lab for power pole training and a computer lab. The new interior spaces will create an appealing environment to elevate student learning. A garage will be constructed to store and maintain instructional equipment (bucket trucks, back hoe, etc.)

The transformation of the College’s highly regarded UTT programs will enable more students to enroll in both the traditional utility technology programs and in new programs incorporating renewable energy sources and smart grid technology. In addition, it will ensure ACC’s UTT students are prepared for in-demand occupations.

The Plan

The $5 million project will be a partnership between the State of Michigan and private financial resources. On June 25, 2012, Michigan Governor Rick Snyder signed a higher education capital outlay bill which granted $2.5 million to ACC for its Electrical Power Technology Center.

In anticipation of the $2.5 million from the State, the College began its fundraising efforts to raise the required $2.5 million match. Fundraising begin in May of 2011 with the support of Stephen Fletcher, CEO and Chairman of Alpena Power Company; Ann Burton, President and COO of Alpena Power Company, and Frank Wheatlake, CEO and Chairman of Reed City Power Line Supply Company.

To date, approximately $1.6 million has been raised toward the $2.5 million ACC match, which includes a $1 million bequest from the estate of Alpena businessman Ferris H. Werth. In addition, the Besser Foundation presented ACC with a $250,000 challenge grant in support of the EPTC project, which will provide a one-to-one match for every dollar donated.

With $770,000 remaining to raise, the ACC Foundation trustees have initiated a $600,000 fundraising campaign to assist the College with funding for the Electrical Power Technology Center. The remaining funds will be secured from industry partners, Foundations and College funds.

Once the fundraising campaign has been completed the design and construction documents will be finalized. The bidding and awarding of the contracts will commence, with construction on the Electrical Power Technology Center to begin in April of 2014.