



# Partners for Progress in Delta, Inc

A CONSORTIUM OF EDUCATIONAL PARTNERS

## Progress Report

### Caulfield Heads to Juneau: New Officers and Directors Join the Board

**B**oard President **Richard A. Caulfield** stepped down as president of the Partners for Progress in Delta, Inc. on July 29. Caulfield served as the director of Tanana Valley campus since 2005 and as Partners board president since 2008. Caulfield led the partnership through incorporation in 2007 and recognition as a state Regional Training Center in 2008. He left the University of Alaska Fairbanks to accept the position of Provost at the University of Alaska Southeast in Juneau.

Vice president **Mary Leith-Dowling** replaces Caulfield as president of the Partners for Progress in Delta, Inc. Leith-Dowling has been involved with the partnership since its inception in 2003 when the emphasis was on constructing a facility to house a top-notch Construction Trades program. Leith-Dowling serves as mayor of the City of Delta Junction.

Another founding partner member, **George "Randy" Cheap**, Fairbanks manager for Alaska Works Partnership will continue to serve on the board—as both vice president and secretary for the organization. He is the coordinator for the annual Pipeline Training Academy held in Fairbanks and actively involved in building and promoting career pathways that bring together K-12, the university, industry and the Trades. He provides oversight for the construction academies conducted in Delta.

**Duncan Ware** was appointed Delta/Greely School District superintendent in July and replaces PJ Ford Slack on the partners' board. Ware began his career with the District in 2009 as the itinerant principal serving New Horizon High School, Gerstle River School, and the Delta Cyber School. He, his wife, Stefanie, and seven of their nine children

moved to Alaska from Memphis, Tennessee, where he served as assistant principal at a K-8 1,600-student, magnet school. He also

served six years as the principal of a national blue ribbon elementary school, and at the University of Memphis he coordinated a clinical model preparation program for middle school teachers in science and mathematics. Ware has completed the coursework for his doctorate in instruction and curriculum leadership with a concentration in education administration. He plans on graduating this

December. Ware is very excited about the opportunities that this partnership provides for the students of the school district. He believes that the future demands of our economy locally, nationally, and internationally are only going to be satisfied by focusing efforts on preparing our young people in a K-16 system of partnerships that utilize all of the opportunities for training and growth that can be provided by working together.

**Eric Stewart** joined the board in July 2010, replacing founding board member Whit Hicks, the Executive Director of the Delta Mine Training Center. Stewart came to Alaska in 1992 as a hiking guide in the Denali National Park area. He has always enjoyed sharing with others his passion for exploration of the outdoors. In 2001, he moved to Delta Junction and started his business, Copper Current Electric, which has grown to support many major government projects throughout the Interior. Stewart firmly believes that investing in local talent is best for the community and the state overall. All of his employees are residents of Delta Junction. He holds a Master Electrical Administrator's License and is an alumnus of Boise State University. He and his family live in on a small hobby farm, where they grow giant pumpkins and enjoy the outdoors.



*Mary-Leith Dowling presents outgoing board president Rick Caulfield with a resolution of appreciation at a farewell luncheon in Delta. Duncan Ware is far left.*

### The Partners

Alaska Works Partnership  
[www.alaskaworks.org](http://www.alaskaworks.org)  
 907.457.2597

Delta Mine Training Center  
[www.dmtcalaska.org](http://www.dmtcalaska.org)  
 907.895.2051

Delta/Greely School District  
[www.dgsd.k12.ak.us](http://www.dgsd.k12.ak.us)  
 907.895.4658

University of Alaska Fairbanks Community and Technical College  
[www.ctc.uaf.edu](http://www.ctc.uaf.edu)  
 907.455.2800

University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service  
[www.uaf.edu/ces/](http://www.uaf.edu/ces/)  
 907.474.7246



## VISION

Greater Delta and Interior residents (high school students and adults) are competitive for current and emerging workforce and career advancement opportunities in Alaska's Interior region and elsewhere because the Partners for Progress in Delta, Inc. delivers quality custom technical and career pathway programs to increase and support Alaska's skilled workforce.

## MISSION

The Partners for Progress in Delta, Inc., (PPD), an educational consortium located in Delta Junction, serves as a gateway for learning and training in Alaska, providing the state with a long-term asset for developing and maintaining Alaska's workforce.

## GOALS

- ◆ To excel in helping Alaskans to be competitive for jobs emerging from new developments and existing workforce opportunities in the area;
- ◆ To be a focal point for Alaskans who seek career advancement education and training, academic degrees and continuing education credit;
- ◆ To better prepare secondary students for career options;
- ◆ To facilitate on-the-job training for long-term employment; and
- ◆ To build and nurture long-term partnerships with agencies, businesses, organizations, the trades and government.

# June 2010 Civil Construction Heavy Equipment Academy Graduates Love the Learning and the Big Rigs!

Ten young adults, aged 17- 24 and from as far north as Barrow and as far south as Eureka, Alaska, participated in the intensive three-week Civil Construction Heavy Equipment Academy, June 1-18. Each received forklift operator training and certifications in OSHA 10, MSHA, First Aid, and CPR/AED. They also received job safety and work ethic instruction. The 10 completed the training on June 18.

Again this year the Operating Engineers Local 302 provided the instructors for the three-week program. **Ken Assyd** has been instructing the Heavy Equipment Academies in Delta for several years and this year he was joined by **Jay Hodges**, a Local 302 heavy duty mechanic instructor from Fairbanks. Another first this year was the work accomplished for the Deltana Fair Association. The fair board wanted to reshape and level the mud bogs track on the fairgrounds and to create a camping picnic area for youth groups. The two sites were perfect for the participants to get a feel for the big rigs they were learning to operate; and their work provided a great service to the community.



*Above: Ken Assyd and Jason Hodges on four wheelers checking out the work of two students.*

*Below: Aerial view of the mud bog track work site on the Deltana Fairgrounds.*



## The 2010 students



"I'm loving it," said **Eathon Gebauer** of Delta about the June 2010 academy. His goal is to become an operating engineer and he enthusiastically named the excavator as his favorite machine because, "I like the higher elevation and the digging. It's different."



**Mark Fereti** who travelled from Barrow to participate in Delta's academy came because he wants a job as a heavy equipment operator. His uncle encouraged him to come to Barrow two years ago where there is a lot of sewer and road work available. "I needed it (the training)" and Mark says he has no favorite machine. He likes all of them.



**Alex Shastitko** of Delta took the training because he wanted "to get new skills and have them for the long term and to get a job." He believes his participation will give him a better chance to go to work. He also observed that he thought more women should take the program because "there is a lot of detail and I think women are more careful." He wants to work in Delta and he appreciated the emphasis on safety. He voted for the excavator and the dozer as his favorite pieces of equipment.



**Mikhail "Mike" Lazukin** of Delta wanted more time on the equipment. He would like to see another advanced class so he could transition into an intermediate status. He believes the teachers were great—"they explained things well."



**Mihail "Mike" Zmerzliuc**, also of Delta, wanted to try something new. He wants to go to Fairbanks and find a job. He likes the grader—"It's big and it feels good." He says more should try the program. "It's a great way to learn new things."





**Vladimir Kosmin**, who took the high school Construction Trades class, said he signed up for the Academy because he likes equipment and he wants to try applying for a 302 Operating Engineer slot. He would prefer to stay in Delta, but is ready to go elsewhere if he can get a job. He thought the classes and the instructors were good. He likes “the feel of the dozer” best, because it has power and when you handle it correctly it just “feels right.” The excavator is another favorite because of how the operator sits in the machine and how smoothly the machine moves. He’s all for the training—it made him try harder and he enjoys working with dirt.



Driving from Eureka for the academy, **Joe Lester** has been doing dirt work for the past two years around his home. He thinks the academy in Delta is a great opportunity for young people to get a head start in Alaska. Joe said he appreciated the chance to be a part of the academy and he learned a lot. He discovered information about the academy on a poster in his high school. Joe felt comfortable in Delta and believes the academy offered is “a good stepping stone. It was really beneficial with instructors who are good at teaching.”



**Eugene Yelenskiy** took the Delta High School Construction Trades classes for two years. A 2010 high school graduate, he liked the opportunity to start out right here and find out if he was interested in the work. “I learned about safety and how to operate equipment. In the future I want to try and sign up with the operating engineers.” He liked all of the equipment and is interested in more training on specific pieces of equipment so he can really get good at it. When asked about the academy, he said, “It was great to learn so much—it’s not what you do in everyday life so it’s definitely a chance to learn a lot.”



**Tim Helkenn** has had a goal of becoming an operating engineer for several years. He’s a recent high school graduate and has applied for a slot with the Operating Engineers Local 302. Because he was most familiar with the dozer he said it was his favorite piece of equipment. He also was the academy’s “go to guy” as he helped repair some of the equipment a time or two.

He shared that it was a lot easier to be able to stay at home to get the training. He said, “The academy was a great thing to do. The program helps a lot. It makes a difference in my life and can help me get a good job.”



**Jason “Luke” Cotton** of Delta signed up for the academy because he was interested in heavy equipment. “It was too good of a chance to pass up.” He was home schooled so he wasn’t in the Construction Trades classes, but he heard about welding classes and then the academy. “It is a great skill to have and more advanced classes and training would be good.” He liked the loader and he “enjoyed and appreciated the hands-on experience as it is the best way to learn.” He said he is recommending the academy to others. “It’s free so why pass it up; it’s a great thing to learn and know.” He liked how instructors “had a sharp eye on us” to ensure safety was paramount in all they did. “It was an important message.”

### Graduation Day Charge

Board member **Randy Cheap** addressed the graduates on June 18 telling them to take advantage of every opportunity to learn more. Cheap, who has had training as a certified EMT and an artist, and is a member of the painters’ union, told the group “all that learning comes together over a lifetime to make you successful.”

Board member **Jon Dufendach**, who worked as a mechanic welder on the oil pipeline and went on to help found Delta Industrial Services and now owns CampWater Industries, told the graduates they were a “go ahead outfit.”

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**“Now, you “go ahead and do it—you got the training, take advantage of it. Don’t throw it away. Use it.”**

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Cheap said there are no slackers at the Delta training program. “Every time we do this training in Delta, no one drops out.” Gary Hall, the school district’s Construction Trades instructor and academy organizer, said he had to work hard to keep up with students who were told to be at the job site at 6:30 a.m. “Work ethic wasn’t a problem. There were about four cars beating me to the site every morning!”

Deltana Fair Association president **Patti Carson** told the graduates she was impressed with how they handled themselves. “I wish you luck and success in all you do. The fair appreciates all your hard work this summer.”

## First Delta Academy Graduates Make Journeyman Status

June 2006 we offered the first Civil Construction Heavy Equipment Academy with the support of Alaska Works Partnership and the Operating Engineers Local 302. Of the first 10 participants three were accepted into apprenticeships; two from that first academy have achieved journeyman status with the Operating Engineers Local 302.

Olga Kulinich and Matt Reed were accepted into

apprenticeships by the Operating Engineers right after the completion of the academy in 2006. Olga’s experience with the Academy changed her life. She left a position as a bank teller and embarked upon the world of heavy equipment and work throughout Alaska. Journeyman status signals the completion of an apprenticeship and qualification to work at a specific trade.



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 Organization

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## TVC Becomes CTC

Tanana Valley Campus has a new name. Effective July 1, 2010, the former Tanana Valley Campus is now the University of Alaska Fairbanks UAF Community and Technical College. The classes, instructors and service are the same university classes, instructors and service –there’s just a new name for the college.



## Delta Career Advancement Center

*(Clockwise from top left) The 2010 Academy students with instructors and board members. Sen. Lisa Murkowski with high school students who designed and are building a bunk house. Northrop Grumman company representatives tour the Career Center. Instructor Gary Hall with Construction Trades (CT) students building picnic tables with benches.*

