

Grade 8 Students Check Out High-In-Demand AME Career

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Students see how helicopter operates (photos by Mike Blume)

The second annual AME (Aircraft Maintenance Engineer) Day in Southport for Grade 8 students in the Portage la Prairie School Division took place yesterday. Director of Business Development Deanna Talbot gives an outline.

"The students come to our Hangar 4 Red River College Stevenson Aviation Campus here at Southport," says Talbot. "There are six different activities that they get to experience in the life of an AME. It shows them opportunities for training here at Southport. At lunch, they're going to hear from some people that have jobs in the aviation career at Southport as well."

She notes Grade 8 students are at an age when they begin to think about careers and high school classes. Talbot says they're happy to partner with Red River College for the effort.

Portage la Prairie School Division Career Development Coordinator Blair Hordeski shares the division's perspective.

"I think this is just a fantastic partnership that we have going with Red River College Stevenson Aviation," notes Hordeski. "It's a great precursor for these Grade 8 students that are coming to the High School next year. One of the things that they'll be taking next year as part of their ELA course is a career development portion. A huge portion of that program is dedicated to career exploration."

He says he doesn't think it's about a 14-year-old deciding what to do for the rest of his or her life, as much as it is about exploring passions and opportunities.



Wendy Bartinski is Administrator and Finance at the Southport Campus and says the Aircraft Maintenance Engineer occupation isn't very well known, but highly desirable for various companies. Licensed AMEs are lacking, with schools unable to fill the need. She says school kids don't even recognize this as a career option.

An AME position handles anything in the sky, ensuring it's signed off for safety standards. It requires four years to become licensed, two of which includes training in a school and the remaining years involve completing tasks with the company. Bartinski says getting

(L-R) Deanna Talbot and Wendy Bartinski

this license makes one eligible to work anywhere in Canada, as well as anywhere in the world where Canadian aircraft are being maintained. She says this makes it a career for those interested in mechanics as well as have an interest in travelling and doing something different. This includes actually flying with a helicopter while fighting fires, as part of a very broad range of options. This program in Southport is the only one in Canada, and they're a *journeyperson* program, seeing students already employed in the industry whose training is subsidized through Manitoba Apprenticeship. Students come to the community, live there and spend nine weeks, with the remainder of the time with the company.

View the embedded image gallery online at:

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