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Rock Valley College hosts ribbon-cutting for Aviation Career Education Center

Rock Valley College held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for its new Aviation Career Education Center (ACEC) on Wednesday, September 16. College leadership, trustees, staff, faculty, and students were joined by local dignitaries, politicians, and community members for the special ceremony.

The ACEC is a 40,000-square-foot classroom and lab facility located on Cessna Drive at the Chicago Rockford International Airport. It replaces the 9,800-square-foot Falcon Road hangar that was home to the RVC's aviation maintenance technology program since 1968. Previously, the program was able to produce about 50 graduates each year, but the new facility will allow the college to triple that number.

"We are proud that the college and regional entities have the vision to provide leadership in creating win-win opportunities like this," said Mike Mastroianni, President of Rock Valley College. "Education and job creation are critical components to transforming our region and through this program expansion we are accomplishing both."

The building officially opened for the start of the fall semester on August 24. Currently the program has 81 first-year and 35 second-year students enrolled. Forty additional first-year students will be starting for spring semester in January 2016.

"We are excited to welcome even more students and faculty of Rock Valley College to RFD and look forward to the jobs and opportunities the RVC Career Aviation Center will create for the region," said Mike Dunn, Executive Director, Chicago Rockford International Airport.

Adjacent to the ACEC, AAR Corp is constructing an MRO (Maintenance, Repair and Overall services) that is expected to open in late 2016 that will bring 500 or more jobs to the airport and provide employment for graduates from RVC's aviation maintenance technology program.

"AAR is excited about the terrific aviation maintenance technology learning environment that Rock Valley College has created in such a short period of time," said Danny Martinez, Vice President Technical Services Development, AAR. "This world-class Aviation Career Education Center will deliver that talent pipeline of aviation mechanics that AAR needs for our new hangar to be successful when it opens in Rockford."

To learn more about RVC's aviation maintenance technology program, go to rockvalleycollege.edu/aviation or call (815) 921-3020.

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