

MEMO FROM THE MAYOR

SUBJECT: THAT PRETTY PR2TA BUSH IS STARTING TO LEAF OUT AND BLOOM!

Bottom Line Up Front: The Payette River Regional Technical Academy (PR2TA) is on the cusp of gaining approval by the Idaho Department of Career Technical Education (CTE) of a career track historically absent in rural America for its high school students: as a secondary partner with Treasure Valley Community College (TVCC). PR2TA's proposed aviation track will eventually offer dual credit towards completion of an Associates of Applied Science Degree in Aviation, which includes fixed-wing pilot training and FAA Airframe and Powerplant rating. What an exciting opportunity for our youth.

Calling All Students Interested in A Rewarding Career

Many of us have experienced purchasing a bush or a perennial plant of some kind, perhaps to honor mom on Mothers' Day or to celebrate a birth or graduation, only to have the poor thing struggle for years after its planting. The plant looks nothing like the pretty picture of what it was supposed to look like on its packaging when we brought it home from the garden store. What to do? Then, out of the clear-blue western sky comes Sky King...er...I mean someone, usually more adept than us at the green thumb business, who suggests we move the plant to another location, perhaps where the sun or the soil better suits it. And voila! It blooms and grows—and blooms and grows some more, finally providing the great joy for which we intended all along.

That analogy aptly applies to our own Payette River Regional Technical Academy. Now housed in its own place at the former Forest Service Building on SH 16, where the sun and soil will allow it to grow and bloom the way it was intended, PR2TA is no longer constrained to outbuildings on the high school campus, the kind of buildings that make do in a pinch, but should never be considered a long-time solution for students.

Since 2015, the city has utilized the talents of PR2TA's pre-engineering and culinary students in a host of ways—from operating as the major player in the city's successful annual New Year's Eve Cherry Rise, to catering various events. The school teaches solid skill sets to its students, including the all-important problem-solving-in-teams skill, too often lacking nowadays, vis-à-vis, "It's my way or the highway" non-starter.

Now that PR2TA has its own buildings—classrooms and administrative offices at the former Forest Service Complex, plus a brand new 4800 square foot hanger at the city airport—the school is in the midst of obtaining permission from the Idaho Department of Career Technical Education (CTE) to initiate what will ultimately become a full-spectrum aviation career track from the ground (airframe and powerplant rating) up to flight certification. Most exciting is the fact its program will be a collaborative effort with Treasure Valley Community College (TVCC) of Ontario, Oregon, with its footprint in Caldwell, but that’s not all.

Apparently, my old alma maters of Idaho State University, in particular, and the University of Idaho want to partner in this venture. Further, North Idaho College has expressed a desire to partner in a unique way. It could provide some necessary equipment as it transitions from airframe and power plant training to purely powerplant training. What great partners these institutions will make.

Should the Idaho Department of Career Technical Education (CTE) approve PR2TA’s program and, when PR2TA students acquire dual credits with TVCC towards completion of an Associate of Applied Science in Aviation-Fixed Wing Pilot Training, coupled with FAA Airframe and Powerplant Rating, the school will provide the crown jewel in its array of offerings in the applied STEM Fields. Imagine how exciting it will be if Emmett would just happen to influence the career and preparation of one of the next post-Mars landing astronauts!

We know that the aviation industry, not to mention the US military, have great needs for mechanics and pilots. So much so, some airlines outsource their maintenance work to other countries. PR2TA is well positioned to do its part in stopping this economically destructive trend.

Finally, most long-time Emmettites have their favorite pilot who flew out of the city airport and a pilot story or two to go along. How cool would it be to raise up a new generation of Emmett kids dedicated to aviation and the benefits it brings to communities like ours? It’s as though Chuck Sawyer is going to have a bunch of “grandkids” he never knew!