

Is there a pilot in you?

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RYAN PAULSEN

rpaulsen@thedailyobserver.ca

If you're someone who has always wanted to fly, you're probably not alone, and you just might be in luck.

Last weekend, representatives from Ottawa Aviation Services held an open house at the Pembroke and Area Airport to try to determine if it would be feasible for them to offer a flight school for people in the area, based out of the airport.

The group has made a few trips to Pembroke over the past few years, but previous visits were more "fun" and less "feasibility study," with prospective students taken up for short flights in the training aircraft.

This trip was more business-like, and was intended to get down to brass tacks, with interested individuals asked to sign up only if they really thought that they would, and could, attend lessons fairly regularly, should the school eventually open for business.

"What we're trying to do is see how many people are actually interested in doing flight training up here," explains chief flight instructor Frank Brzobohaty. "And then, if we have enough of an interest, we'll actually look at bringing an aircraft up here. We're planning on three days a week, so the instructor would fly up here in the morning, spend the day training with people and then fly home in the afternoon, or in the evening."

Brzobohaty hopes to have between 10 and 12 students signed up for the school. From there, many other details, including when exactly the school takes place, are more flexible, as long as the student base is there.

"We'd like to see the airplane up here three days a week. What days? It doesn't really matter. What we want to do is be able to fill the aircraft [and have] enough of a demand that the airplane would be flying all the time. For us to send the airplane up with just one or two flights a day, it doesn't make it economically viable because the instructor is sitting around not doing anything."

In order to prove their interest, eventually prospective students will be asked to place a deposit in an escrow account, a third-party account that holds money for the protection of both the school and the student, but all of that will ultimately depend on decisions made by OAS as to the future of the school's satellite location.

Best-case scenario, according to Brzobohaty, is that there could be a school running in Pembroke by early 2012, since all of the logistic preparations, including securing classroom space and permission to make use of airport facilities, have been made, and if student interest is sufficient it just remains for the OAS to make the appropriate applications to Transport Canada for final permission to run the classes.

For more information on the school, contact Brzobohaty or assistant chief flight instructor Lance Carr by e-mail at: info@ottawaaviationservices.com.

Ryan Paulsen is a Daily Observer multimedia journalist. Follow him on Twitter @PRyanPaulsen.