



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

August 8, 2023

To Whom it May Concern,

The City of Cold Lake holds Portage College in high regard and a significant and valued community partner. The College's presence in our community contributes greatly to our residents' quality of life, and its efforts have and will continue to contribute to the diversification of our economy and the strength of our workforce.

We take great interest in the College's continued success and thus, we met the news that Portage College is planning to work with Vertex Simulation on a program for environmental simulation in the drone training space with great enthusiasm.

Portage College is requesting funding for the Portage College Environmental Simulation and Drone Training Program to give Portage College's Environmental Sciences programming and possibly other Canadian community colleges a distinct advantage.

Funding would be used to create and expand Environmental Sciences programming offerings and will include associated basic drone pilot training. The initiative includes the development of virtual training simulations for various environmental scopes that will target and inspire our youth and both current and upcoming environmental and energy professionals in a safe and fun learning environment. The three environmental virtual training programs with associated practical drone training will focus on:

1. Well site reclamation with setup for monitoring and assessing well site reclamation. This virtual program will also include soil identification.
2. Wildlife identification. This virtual program will focus on foundational wildlife identification.
3. Vegetation identification. This virtual program will also include weed identification with an emphasis on noxious and controlled weeds.

This virtual environmental training will allow graduates to "visualize" their future combined with the drone training will enable students to "fly" towards contributing to a highly-skilled and specialized workforce to ensure Alberta's ability to grow in multiple sectors in an environmentally conscience and sustainable manner.

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As per Alberta 2030, the main drivers of economic growth and productivity are technology, innovation and educated, skilled and knowledgeable people. As a vested partner focused on Alberta's growth and prosperity, we believe that increased access to Environmental Sciences training with associated drone pilot training is a critical need in Alberta.

We strongly favor this grant application. The Portage College Environmental Simulation and Drone Training Program plan will be supported by our organization in the form of program promotion and potential program enrollments.

Should you require any further information about the City of Cold Lake's support for this project, please feel free to contact me at your earliest convenience.

Best regards,

Craig Copeland
Mayor, City of Cold Lake