

*Huron Flight Centre Inc.*

# Flight Instruction Business Has Taken Off!

Who would have imagined that working up north would lead to a career in the sky? Dennis Ryan never expected that 29 years ago, he would discover his future career in Red Lake, Ontario helping to unload fishermen and hunters to a float base.

While he worked in the lab of Cabot Carbon, Ryan pursued his commercial pilot's license. After five years it led to his first job as flight instructor with Huron Aviation and then to a stint as a commercial pilot with Simo Air, which later became Georgian Airways.

In 1999, Ryan had to make a choice between flying for Air Ontario and buying the flight instruction part of Huron Aviation's business. He chose the latter, establishing Huron Flight Centre at Sarnia's Chris Hadfield Airport and he has literally helped the business take off!

"I can't believe I get paid to do this," says Ryan. "The pilot only works for the five minutes at takeoff and the five minutes it takes to land. The rest is housekeeping. This job is 90 per cent boredom and 10 percent terror."

The business was established with two Cessna planes (a 4-seater model 172 and a 2-seater model 150) and increased to six (three of each model) by early 2001. Activities now include a flight instruction school, airplane mechanical repair, hangar and aircraft rental, and for bush pilots – a floatplane and winter survival program.

Prior to 1999, the flight school averaged less than 100 flying hours per month. It has since increased to over 300 flying hours per month, having produced over 50 commercial pilots! Specialized personal attention and the variety of customized programs have drawn customers from across North America. On June 3, 2007, her 14th birthday, Sabrina

Gonzalez-Pasterski became the youngest US born student pilot to fly solo in Canada!

At the Huron Flight Centre, curious souls can discover what it really feels like to fly a plane. In a familiarization flight, clients can experience the thrill of flying an airplane safely with the support of a fully trained pilot just a few feet away. For those who want to make flying their career, a variety of different programs are offered from ground school training up to and including a commercial pilot license. Private pilot license and recreational license training are also available.

Ryan offers programs to increase interest in aviation and hopes to make Chris Hadfield Airport a destination point for tourists to Sarnia-Lambton area. For example, he has twice organized and hosted The Great Canadian Fly-In, a weekend air show and

music festival at the airport using the slogan "Spend a day in the clouds and a night with the stars!"

He also offers a Top Gun Flight School, a 1-week camp for kids aged 11 to 15, where they build and test fly model aircraft. Chad Tiffin, a student in 2000 is now a commercial pilot and owns two planes.

Ryan has plans for diversification and expansion. Starting in September 2007, he will operate Huron Flight College under Transport Canada and the Ontario Private College Act. In addition, Huron Flight Centre was one of the

selected flight schools qualified in Ontario to administer Transport Canada written exams. Later this year Huron Flight will open a licensed restaurant with a patio at Hangar 1 to attract transient aircraft passengers.

**"SLBDC is an organization that really understands the needs of a non-traditional business like our flight training school. Our business plan supported by SLBDC funding has allowed us to start, expand, and diversify the business. SLBDC has supported us through not only the good times but also the bad times when we most needed the help."**

*Dennis Ryan*



*Dennis Ryan of Huron Flight Centre stands next to a plane owned by Sabrina Gonzalez-Pasterski, who flew solo on her 14th birthday, upon graduating from flight school.*

## SLBDC

### By The Numbers

*For The Quarter Ended  
March 31, 2007*

**225** jobs assisted by business counselling activities

**2,254** client business consultations

**6%** increase in client consultations

**59** jobs created by lending activities

**\$332,000** loaned to Lambton County businesses

**3** loans to expanding and

**3** loans to new businesses

**99** loans totaling \$4.1 million outstanding

**10** new SEB businesses launched

**27** current and potential Community Economic Development (CED) projects

**2.48%** loan loss rate since inception