

Students gain knowledge on job shadow day

by Rachel Castle
88th ABW Public Affairs

About 50 area high school and home school students got real world experience from base mentors during Wright-Patterson's first job shadow day March 24. The activities were planned through the Educational Outreach office.

Kathy Schweinfurth, EO director, welcomed the students and job mentors during a brief orientation in Air Force Institute of Technology's Carney Auditorium in Area B.

Tri-County North student Russell Matheny and home-school student Reuben Patton spent the day with 1st Lt. Brent Davis, deputy program manager for the panoramic night vision goggles program. Russell and Reuben both plan to study business in college, and said job shadow day would give them some first-hand, on-the-job knowledge.

When asked if they could do anything they wanted on base, Russell said he would like to work on the



Air Force photo by Royce Few

Centerville High School student Josh Hunter "flies" a C-141 simulator with co-pilot Chris Hodapp of Carroll High School, under the watchful eyes of C-141C flight simulator instructor pilot Chuck Poore of L-3 Communications. Aeronautical Systems Center employees Merritt Wichner and Royce Few served as mentors to the two students.

mechanics of aircraft and Reuben would like to work on top secret projects.

"I'd like to get a job here," said Reuben. "I don't mind starting at the bottom and working up. I think I have a good chance of getting a job. I believe there is a big opportunity here for me."

When Eric Fiely and Jonathan Burke got up at 5 a.m. to travel from St. Mary's Memorial High School, they thought they were leaving their normal school day behind. Not so.

Terry Sampson, a contract Web

developer at the Air Force Institute of Technology, was ready and waiting with a quiz. After the assessment, Mr. Sampson put the students to work building a Web site from scratch.

He said his main goal for the day was to convey to the students how important teamwork is in the Web development field. "We use everyone's strengths together," Mr. Sampson said.

Eric and Jonathan have had some previous team experience, placing sixth in Ohio and in the top five internationally in Deca Inc. competition. Deca Inc. is a self-defined "association of marketing students," according to www.deca.org.

The competitions are designed to help students develop job skills necessary for success in business fields, particularly marketing and business ownership. The two said they came for job shadow day partly because their success in the competition made them curious to learn more about Web design.

From the sound of it, they came to the right place as Mr. Sampson put them to the test in a real-time, real-world situation. He gave them a piece of code and they had to fill in the missing pieces to develop a site for a client.

"I had no idea we'd be working," said Eric. "I've been entertained all day."

According to Fran Johnson of the Educational Outreach Office, plans are in the works for another Wright-Patterson job shadow day tentatively set for this fall. For more information on the program, call 255-0692.