

Comox Valley Echo

Partnership helps First Nations students learn trades

Tue Dec 15 2009

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Section: News

Source: Comox Valley Echo

Illustrations: Photo: First Nation students enrolled in the Residential Building Maintenance Worker program at North Island College.

A new partnership is helping 16 First Nations students from Comox and Campbell River get an education at North Island College.

Those students are enrolled in the Residential Building Maintenance Worker program, which focuses on eight trades -- carpentry, electrical, roofing, drywall finishing, floor laying, plumbing, refrigeration mechanics and painting.

"The students are dedicated, hard workers who are learning through hands-on experience," said instructor Bill Lucas. "It's a tough program with rigorous exams and I believe these students are up to the challenge."

The initiative is a partnership between BC Hydro, the BC Construction Association, North Island Collage and five local First Nations.

Students have already completed two months of the eight-month program, with graduation in May of next year.

Students will be qualified for jobs requiring the skills to repair and maintain residential and commercial buildings.

"This looks like a great opportunity for the students," said Campbell River Indian Band Chief Bob Pollard. "I know the organizations worked hard to make this program happen, and everyone involved should take pride in this accomplishment."