

Dawson Creek Daily News

2009: a very busy year at NLC

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Illustrations: Photo: Submitted / An inside look at the renovation work being done inside the Health Sciences Building.

More than \$10 million in funding from the Knowledge Infrastructure Program for two construction projects at the Dawson Creek Campus have highlighted one of the busiest years at Northern Lights College in its 34-year history.

NLC received \$2.5 million in April, followed by an additional \$7.8 million in August in separate joint announcements by the Federal and Provincial governments.

The first announcement provided funds for renovations to the Science Building, to create a state-of-the-art Health Sciences facility to house the College's Practical Nurse and Health Care Assistant programs. The College is also working on a Bachelor of Science in Nursing program, which would be based in the building.

When the construction is finished, the building will include a 100-seat lecture hall, several classrooms with videoconference capability, offices and laboratories. Work started in July and the project is to be completed with occupancy for programs by September 2010.

The second announcement provided funds for the construction of Energy House, a facility that will help solidify NLC as B.C.'s Energy College.

The Centre of Excellence for Oil and Gas/Jim Kassen Industry Training Centre continues to be the focal point for oil and gas training from the Fort St. John Campus. Energy House, meanwhile, will be the focal point for the Centre of Excellence for Clean Energy Technologies based at the Dawson Creek Campus.

Energy House is an 807 square-metre multi-use facility that combines classrooms and training facilities with demonstrations of energy saving and renewable-energy technology, and a community meeting hall. The building will produce all its energy needs - electricity and heating - through a wind turbine, solar panel, biomass, and geo-exchange systems.

The project will include a fully functional training lab for wind turbine maintenance, an operating 300KW wind turbine on the property and a training tower with training platform. The building will be constructed targeting LEED platinum standards, the highest in the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design building rating system.

And in February 2010, the inaugural Wind Turbine Maintenance Technician program will accept its first intake of students. It will be the only program of its

type in the province.

As these two construction projects got underway in 2009, NLC celebrated the completion of interior and exterior renovations to the Fort Nelson Campus and the grand opening of its new Aboriginal Gathering Space in November.

As well, NLC increased the number of videoconference rooms across its campus locations to 13. New videoconference rooms were created in Tumbler Ridge and Chetwynd, existing facilities were updated in Dease Lake, and additional rooms were developed in Dawson Creek, Fort Nelson and Fort St. John.

NLC offers more than 20 courses to students throughout the College region by videoconference. As well, the College's Board of Governors and Administration Committee utilize the technology for meetings, thereby reducing travel expenses and the College's carbon footprint.

In March, NLC continued its strategic commitment to providing programs and services towards sustaining agriculture by signing a five-year lease agreement with Vold, Jones and Vold Auction Company Ltd. for the College's Mile Zero Farm, located on the east edge of the City of Dawson Creek, along Hwy. 49.

From a programming perspective, the September 2009 intake of students featured two new certificate programs - Cook 1/Camp Cook at the Dawson Creek Campus, and Geomatics Engineering Technology at the Fort St. John Campus. As well, NLC partnered with the Horn River Basin Shale Gas Producer Group to offer a special intake of the Oil and Gas Field Operators program at the Fort Nelson Campus.

These new programs helped the College experience a 12.9 per cent increase in enrolment for the September 2009 intake of students. There were 1,060 full-time equivalent students enrolled in September 2009, compared to 939 in September 2008. All four of the College's programming divisions saw increased numbers of students.

Northern Lights College is B.C.'s Energy College, serving the northern third of British Columbia from its eight campus locations: Atlin, Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Dease Lake, Fort Nelson, Fort St. John, Hudson's Hope, and Tumbler Ridge. NLC serves students in an area covering more than 325,000 square kilometres and containing approximately 70,000 people.

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