

# Nelson Star

## Selkirk budgets for cuts

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Selkirk College is planning for a deep cut to its annual capital allowance when the provincial budget update is announced next week.

All B.C. colleges were told to plan a tighter capital budget for their 2010- 2011 fiscal year, which begins April 1. At Selkirk the allowance for upgrades and maintenance to facilities is expected to be slashed by 74 per cent, reducing it from \$1.4 million to \$368,000.

"There are many routine things, like putting fresh paint on the wall, that just won't happen this year," explained Selkirk College president Marilyn Luscombe.

The college is working internally to put aside a contingency fund to use for emergency maintenance that may be needed through the year, though it hasn't disclosed where that money will come from.

Last year, through a number of cost saving measures, Selkirk was able to clear a three-year debt from its operation budget in just one year.

But new cutbacks may send the school back into the red. Selkirk is the oldest regional college in the province, and it has many buildings around 45 years old that are in constant need of attention.

"If we have a sewage leak or some other emergency, we need to be able to deal with that," Luscombe said. "It's going to a challenge."

Meanwhile, the college is charging ahead with plans to renovate the dormitories on the Tenth Street College in Nelson.

Since receiving word last November that it had been successful in its application for a \$7 million grant through Western Economic Diversification's Community Adjustment Fund, the college has been in the process of selecting a company to manage the renovation project.

Three companies have been shortlisted and will have their final proposals to the college March 1 and Luscombe expects to announce the successful applicant next week.

"Because of the tight timeframe on the project, we were looking for a company with great familiarity with this type of work," Luscombe said.

No local Kootenay companies made it on the shortlist, though they are B.C.- based.

"We do hope as much as possible that local trades

people will be employed on the project, since the aim was to create jobs," Luscombe said.

The college is under deadline to spend the first \$1 million for the project before the end of March 2010, while the whole project must be finished by March 2011.

The renovated residence will open up housing 100 students in LEED certified two- and three-bedroom apartment-style units, with in suite kitchenette and bathroom facilities. This will be an improvement from the single-occupancy rooms with centralized bathroom and kitchens developed in 1960s and unused since 2003.

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