

Oak Bay News

Camosun relights B.C. Games torch

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Greener version of the Games' symbol created

Students, graduates and faculty in Camosun College's engineering department were tasked earlier this year with making the B.C. Games torch greener.

As it stood for 20 years, the flame ran on natural gas for 100 days prior to the opening of both the summer and winter games.

Kelly Mann, president and CEO of the B.C. Games Society, said last year he took heed of the province's initiative to go green, and figured that burning a non-renewable resource wasn't helping the cause. "It made sense that we wouldn't replace an old technology with an old technology," he said, so he enlisted the help of Camosun College to create a green flame.

The final design, which was unveiled last week, is a 4.5-metre, 545-kilogram anodized aluminum structure that plugs into a wall socket and uses about the same amount of electricity as a toaster.

Alan Duncan, chair of electronics and computer engineering, outlined the features that students and faculty put in to the LED (light-emitting diode) system that makes up the flame, including 315 high-powered LEDs and 12 microprocessors that control the lights to create the flame effect.

"The effect will look quite stunning both in the day and at night," he said. "This is quite a unique venture."

Frances Semple, a student in the engineering graphic technician program, was enlisted to design the torch. A sculptor by trade, Semple said it's been a great experience to be able to work with classmates and faculty on such a special project.

"It's been a fantastic way of putting them both together, my past as a sculptor and my education. And it's what I want to do in the future," she said.

Karl Huffman is the self-described jack-of-all-trades for the project, working on anything from the planning to the design and fabrication. Also a student in the engineering graphic technician program, he created a 3D simulation of the eventual flame to understand just what the project will entail.

"It's really allowed me to take everybody's ideas and create that visualization," he said. "It was a great opportunity to experience and apply what I learned in the program. And get to work with great people and flush out my skill sets."

The new torch was being sent to Terrace this week to mark 100 days before the start of the 2010 B.C. Winter Games, March 4-7.

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