

Nov 29 A2L

Scholarship support helpful to OK student

Completing his Electronic Engineering Technology diploma at Okanagan College is going to be a little bit easier for second-year student Aaron Edis, courtesy of some welcome financial support.

Edis was the happy recipient of a \$1,000 Canada Technology Bursary scholarship last week, sponsored by TD Meloche Monnex.

It was presented to him by John Leech, the executive director of the Applied Science Technicians and Technologists of British Columbia.

While his 91.6 per cent average in the first year suggests that getting through the second year of the two-year diploma program won't be a struggle academically, Edis admits that it can be a struggle financially, even though his wife works full-time to support his studies.

"This will definitely help," said the 23-year-old, who decided to build on a short career as an electrician by pursuing a credential in Electronic Engineering Technology.

"The money will be very useful, but it's also very encouraging to see support from ASTTBC and from companies like TD Monnex Meloche.

"It's a strong message that people see the value in our education and want to encourage us."

It's an education and an area that Edis thinks warrants promotion.

"I recognized that there is a need for technologists and technicians and that the demand is only going to grow in the years ahead. That's one of the reasons I decided to pursue the diploma," Edis said.

"There is already a significant issue meeting the skills gap in this area," added Leech.

"And as the effects of our demographic situation hit home and the economy accelerates, it is only going to get worse."

"It's companies like TD Meloche Monnex, which has been a steadfast contributor to the ASTTBC's Foundation for Education and Advancement in Technology, who will help us encourage more interest in technical and technological careers."

The scholarship award was recently presented to Edis at a gathering of senior officials of Okanagan College, the Okanagan Science and Technology Council and the City of Kelowna.

Later that day, Edis joined more than 150 other students attending a Kelowna campus event, who received 98 awards, worth \$141,627.

He received three other awards: the Electronic Engineering Technology department award, a B.C. Hydro Scholarship, and the Walter Gray Endowment Fund Award in Electronic Engineering.

The Okanagan College Foundation expects that by the end of the fiscal year (March 31, 2010), it will have distributed approximately \$1 million to students this year.