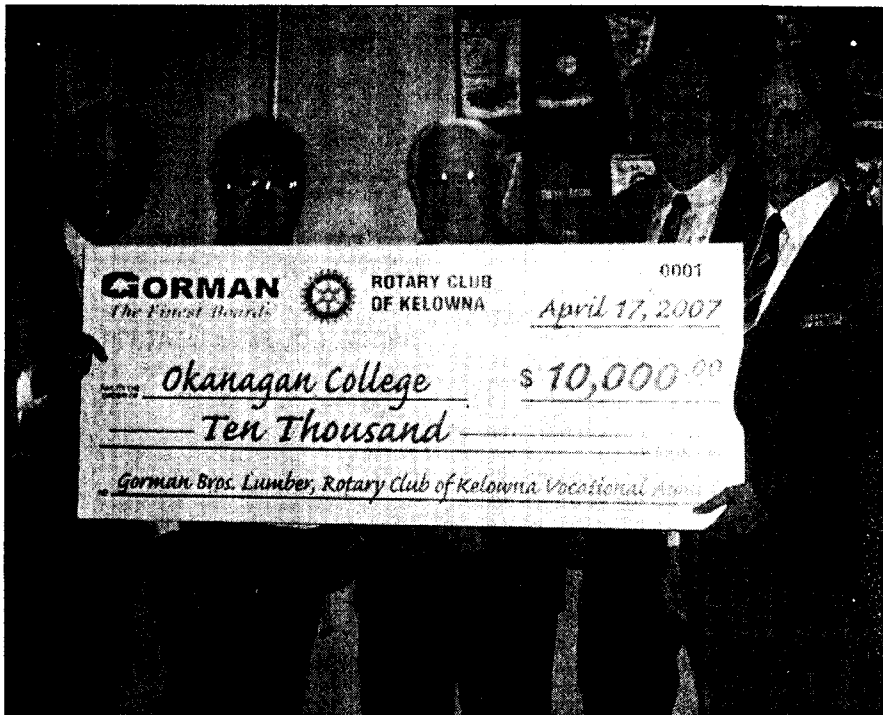


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Submitted photo

From left, Rotary Club of Kelowna president Gary Bennett, Gorman Bros director Kathryn Vernon, Gorman Bros co-founder Ross Gorman, Gorman Bros CEO Bill Reedy and Okanagan College president Jim Hamilton.

## Gorman Bros, leads way

### ■ Lumber company partners with Rotary Club of Kelowna and Okanagan College in unique scholarship program

Gorman Bros. Lumber Ltd. is arguably the Okanagan Valley's leading business when it comes to philanthropy in the community.

It is renowned for its involvement with the United Way and the Kelowna Community Food Bank, for being the largest corporate contributor to The Central Okanagan Foundation and for supporting many other community-minded initiatives.

At an annual joint luncheon between the Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary Club of Kelowna, Gorman Bros. demonstrated once again that it is serious about giving back to this community.

Gorman Bros. is the charter corporate partner in an alliance between the Rotary Club of Kelowna and Okanagan College in creating a scholarship for mid-career people wanting to upgrade their job skills, but face economic barriers to doing so.

"With the growing skill shortage in trades and other areas, combined with a lot of financially strapped mid-career people wanting to upgrade their skills and standard of living, we saw an opportunity to more closely link the needs of the business community with the vocational service initiatives of Rotary," said Kathy Butler, director of advancement for Okanagan College and a member of the Rotary Club of Kelowna.

The scholarship program is funded primarily by corporate partners, with Rotary also contributing. For the corporate partner, it is an

opportunity to fund a trade they have a need for. For Rotary, it is an opportunity to support someone with the motivation to upgrade, but not the financial resources.

For the recipient themselves, it presents opportunity not only to upgrade skills, but the potential opportunity for future employment with the corporate partner who sponsors their scholarship.

Gorman Bros. has taken the program to another level. "We saw a need to be addressed which was more important than any skill deficiency we may have. Skill shortages in the health-care sector are far and away a bigger concern, and we felt Rotary's program was an opportunity for us to lead the way and make a contribution," said Bill Reedy, CEO of Gorman Bros.

The initial contribution is \$10,000 to fund two \$5,000 scholarships for the licensed practical nursing diploma.

Reedy added, "We think this is a program other companies should consider, and we challenge them to get on board; if not to help address community needs then at least to address their own needs, and to help people improve their standard of living."

Gary Bennett, president of the Rotary Club of Kelowna, added, "When we were developing this program, we knew its success would be predicated on finding a company that is seen by the public and business community as a pace setter, and Gorman Bros fit that bill perfectly. We want to expand and perpetuate this program, and we are looking for other businesses to follow Gorman Bros.' lead."

More information about the scholarship partnership program can be obtained by contacting Kathy Butler at Okanagan College.

— Submitted story