

OKANAGAN COLLEGE

Funds starting to flow

Close to \$350,000 has been raised toward \$5M share of Centre of Excellence

Special to The Daily Courier

PENTICTON — Following a slower-than-anticipated summer, fundraising for the new Centre of Excellence in Sustainable Building Technologies and Renewable Energy Conservation at Okanagan College in Penticton is picking up.

Jim Henderson, vice-chairman of the Okanagan College Foundation, said in mid-August that donations needed to raise the \$5 million for its share of the \$28-million facility had been trickling in.

He chalked it up to a simple case of the "summer doldrums" when people are either on vacation or busy enjoying warm-weather pursuits.

"Things have turned around beautifully," said Henderson. "All of a sudden, all sorts of people are showing interest."

Currently, close to \$350,000 (about double August's total) has been raised, and it appears more good news is on the horizon.



SCOTT TRUDEAU/Special to The Daily Courier

Jim Hamilton, president of Okanagan College, and Donna Lomas, regional dean for the South Okanagan-Similkameen, discuss plans for the \$28-million Centre of Excellence.

"A number of corporate requests have been made and the response to these requests have been positive and indicating some six-figure donations," said Henderson.

The college foundation has a community strategy in place, and information about the project is

being sent to about 1,700 alumni.

Henderson said a ground-breaking ceremony for the centre of excellence should happen in about a month. An open house outlining the project was held on Friday.

Some construction has already begun to move the existing college parking lot to make room for the centre, which will be situated at the southwest portion of the property.

The campaign was launched at the end of May. Most of the money for the new building is coming from the federal (\$13 million) and B.C. (\$9.1 million) governments.

CEI Architecture Planning Interiors, which has extensive experience in green building design and technology, is looking after the design.

The 8,500-square-metre structure, set for completion by September 2011, will be able to house an additional 800 students. About 520 new student openings will be created in geothermal heating, ventilation and air conditioning; power (litman; life cycle site management; refrigeration mechanics; and electrical and plumbing apprenticeships. It will generate 304 additional jobs during the construction phase and 276 following completion.