

**ENGINEERING WEEK**

# Spaghetti western, and eastern



GARY NYLANDER/The Daily Courier

Okanagan College student Brendon Sryda prepares his entry during last year's spaghetti bridge competition at Okanagan College.

## OK College welcomes Iranian team for first time in 6 years

Special to The Daily Courier

After three sleepless days and nights and a spaghetti bridge broken in transit, four students from Iran's ABA University are just happy to be in Kelowna.

The group made the trip from Tehran to compete in Okanagan College's 27th annual spaghetti bridge building competition after months of groundwork to secure their travel to Canada.

"It is amazing for us to be here today," team captain Ashkan Mohammadvali said.

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Photo submitted

From left, Mohammad Mazaheri, Ghazaleh Hoseini, Ghazaleh Omidvar and Ashkan Mohammadvali work on the bridge they will enter into Okanagan College's spaghetti bridge contest.

# Spaghetti

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"Everyone has been so nice to us," Mohammadvali said. "But, unfortunately, we haven't seen anything but the hotel."

It's been six years since Okanagan College hosted a team from Iran; students from the Middle Eastern country took home second place in the 2004 competition, but have struggled to secure travel visas ever since.

"It is very difficult for us to travel to Canada," Mohammadvali said. "In Iran, you must complete your military service before going abroad.

"So in order for us to be here, our university had to put a lot on the line."

To prove just how committed they were to attending the competition, the university's president accompanied them on the trip.

Mohammadvali and his teammates are second-year civil engineering students. They won their school's bridge contest and wanted the opportunity to stack up against teams from the west.

Last year's competition was won by Aliz Totivan and Norbert Pozsonyi of Hungary. Their bridge weighed 982 grams and held 443.58 kilograms before shattering in front of a packed audience of spectators. Totivan and Pozsonyi won't com-

pete this year – they've graduated – but their school is sending another team.

Mohammadvali expects to be in the running for the top prize in the competition – he thinks his team's bridge will hold more than 300 kilograms. It took a bit of a beating during the flight and stopovers but, fuelled by caffeinated beverages, the team has worked frantically to repair the damage to restore the bridge to its pre-flight strength.

The international spaghetti showdown will take place at the Okanagan College lecture theatre at 1 p.m. today. The competition will also be broadcast live on the web and can be viewed by logging in to: [klo-media-1.okanagan.bc.ca](http://klo-media-1.okanagan.bc.ca).