

College made news with \$28-M expansion

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The Herald features the eighth in a series of articles of its top-10 local news stories in 2009, as selected by an editorial panel. Rated as the third top story was the Okanagan College expansion.*

By SCOTT TRUDEAU

Penticton Herald
Copyright

A \$28-million expansion of the Okanagan College campus in Penticton will increase its capacity by 800 students and is predicted to serve as the educational hub for the South Okanagan-Similkameen region.

In April, after hints of a major funding announcement at the Penticton campus on Duncan Avenue West, the construction of a new Centre for Excellence in Green Building Technology was announced amid hundreds of people, including students and various city and town council members from the South Okanagan.

Funding for the new facility is divided three ways, with \$9.1 million coming from the province, \$13.5 million from the federal government and \$5 million from the college.

By May, a fundraising campaign by the Okanagan College foundation had been launched to come up with its \$5-million portion. With no capital reserve funds to draw upon, the job of finding the money falls on members of the college's Penticton fundraising committee.

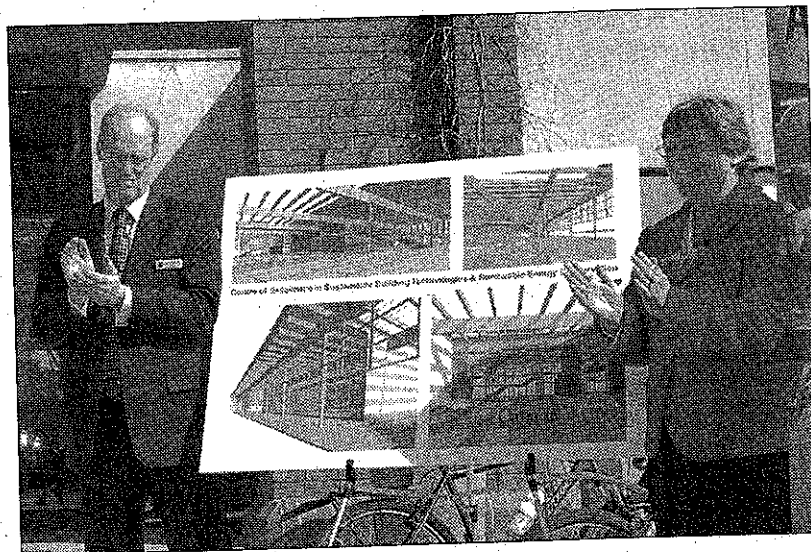
At the ground-breaking ceremony for the centre in November, nearly \$400,000 of the \$5 million had been collected.

The project consists of a two-storey, 8,500-square metre multi-purpose facility, approximately triple the size of the current campus. It will be accommodate an additional

800 students, including 520 new students in programs such as geothermal; heating, ventilation and air conditioning; power lineman; life cycle site management; refrigeration mechanics; and electrical and plumbing apprenticeships.

As well, 20 spaces are expected for students in a new ap-

plied conservation technician program in association with the En'owkin Centre, 41 more students in the college's human kinetics program and 22 in the special education assistant program, and room for 50 students in university transfer



Herald file photo

Okanagan College president Jim Hamilton, left, and regional dean Donna Lomas applaud the April announcement of \$28 million for construction of the new Centre for Excellence in Green Building Technology at the Penticton campus. The project consists of an 8,500-square metre, two-storey multi-purpose facility, capable of accommodating an additional 800 students.

arts programs. The facility also makes room for 165 full-time students enrolled in trades training at other city locations leased by the college.

A gymnasium, fitness room and rooftop running track will complement health courses and provide additional recreational opportunities in the city. There will also be a 200-seat cafeteria.

Other advantages of the new centre come in its reliance on alternative energy sources for heating and

cooling, and that it can be featured for the use of B.C. forest industry products in green buildings, allow for expansion of the existing library and provide special space for its practical nursing and residential-care aide programs.

A total of 304 jobs will be generated — 278 directly from the facility's construction and 26 full-time positions upon its completion, which is estimated for sometime in 2011. Construction is slated to begin in June.

3

**The Herald's
TOP 10 NEWS
STORIES OF 2009**