

# Creating college industry

SA  
Observer  
Dec 23/09  
A12

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OBSERVER STAFF

Explorations into the idea of Salmon Arm pursuing a college town identity are gathering momentum.

At the Salmon Arm Downtown Improvement Association's December meeting, Chad Eliason, city council's representative on the board, said a meeting of interested parties was held recently to discuss the concept and how it would benefit downtown.

The fall fairgrounds were mentioned as a potential site for an enlarged college campus during Smart Growth deliberations over the past year.

Eliason remarked: "Obviously a lot of negotiating and talking needs to be done."

He said a town hall meeting has been proposed.

"We're looking for support from the DIA to help make a town hall meeting to discuss the possibility."

DIA directors remarked that the significance of the college in the community doesn't seem to be well-known.

Director Patty Munro pointed to the trades training centre owned by the college in the in-

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**Jim Barmby**  
OKANAGAN COLLEGE

dustrial park. She said if discussions about the college town concept lead to more awareness of what the college does and offers, then more people would likely buy into the concept.

She also noted that the existing campus has underground stream issues that limit expansion. Asked by the *Observer*

about the college town concept, Jim Barmby, Okanagan College dean for the Shuswap-Revelstoke region, said explorations of the concept are in very preliminary stages and must be community-driven.

"The college is exploring with different community groups the idea of developing a com-

munity-driven project to bring to Salmon Arm a new college campus," he said. "We're looking for ways to better serve the community that are sustainable over a long period of time, and looking for ways that build on the strengths of the community."