

# Dream coming true for soon-to-be teacher

**Gregory Stickney is one of 12 graduates from the first trades technology teacher education program at Okanagan College**

By Daily Courier Staff

Gregory Stickney has taken the first two steps toward his dream of becoming a shop teacher, thanks to the trades technology teacher education program at Okanagan College.

"I have always wanted to be a shop teacher," said Stickney, one of 12 graduates from the first TYTE class.

When he graduated from Peniticon High School in 1994, the closest training facility for shop teachers was BCIT, so the Okanagan native would have had to move to Burnaby, away from family and friends, something he was not prepared to do.

"When I wasn't able to receive the

training I needed close to home, I decided to hone my skills in carpentry and worked in a cabinet shop," said Stickney.

"A few years ago, I heard rumblings that the TYTE program might be coming to Okanagan College, so I quit my job and enrolled at the college's Peniticon campus to fulfil the 30 credits of arts and science the degree requires."

In September 2005, the college welcomed the first TYTE class to its Kelowna campus. Stickney has completed two of the three requirements to be certified as a trades and technology teacher.

The three components are: a two-year TYTE diploma, 30 credits of arts and science courses, and completion of the 12-month secondary teacher ed



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education program (STEP) which can be taken at UBCO.

On Monday, Stickney and 11 of his college classmates began the STEP program at UBC Okanagan. They will take specialized courses for trades teachers and will join other students pursuing secondary teaching courses in a variety of disciplines.

"The best part of the TYTE program was the teachers I had," said Stickney. "They were so qualified and supportive; they did their best to keep us focused; and they encouraged us along every step of the way."

When they complete their training, Stickney and others with his credentials will have no shortage of jobs to choose from, said Dan Hurd, department head of

at Mount Boucherie Senior Secondary.

"We are facing what will be a severe shortage of trades and technology teachers in our province," says Hurd.

"The boom in the trades industry has made working in industry too attractive for would-be teachers. That, combined with the fact that many qualified teachers are being lured to the hot economy of Alberta, means that we will be facing a drastic need in the near future."

"Regardless of what I end up doing with my career, I will never regret taking the TYTE program," said Stickney.

"The knowledge and skills I am walking away with are well worth the effort I put in. I learned such a variety of skills and valuable trades I will never take my car to another mechanic because now I can fix it myself."

The next session for TYTE at Okanagan College begins Sept. 4. For more information about the program, call 762-5445, extension 4424, or go on-