

PENTICTON

# College officials tickled pink as work starts on green centre

## \$28M facility expected to make college a leader in training, technology for green construction

By SCOTT TRUDEAU  
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Blustery winds may have shortened the official groundbreaking for the Centre of Excellence in Sustainable Building Technologies and Renewable Energy Conservation at the Penticton campus of Okanagan College on Friday, but they failed to suppress excitement surrounding the \$28-million facility.

Representatives from the provincial and federal governments were on hand to acknowledge new opportunities the centre will bring for students and the impact it will have on the entire South Okanagan. Site preparations have begun for the project, which will provide about 180 jobs during construction.

Most of the project funding — \$23 million — is coming from the federal and provincial governments. The college is responsible for providing the remaining \$5 million.

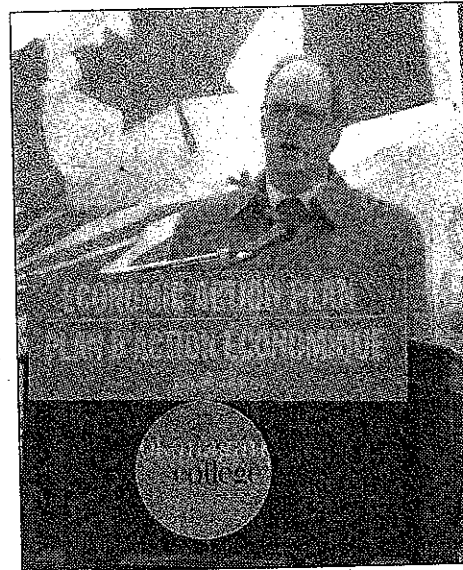
Jim Henderson is leading the fundraising campaign on behalf of the Okanagan College Foundation.

He said at Friday's ceremony that donations have picked up since the start of fall. "The bubble has burst, and it's starting to come in," said Henderson.

The BMO Financial Group announced a \$75,000 injection for the centre, and PCL contributed \$100,000, pushing the total raised so far to about \$425,000.

Okanagan-Coquihalla MP Stockwell Day called the government's investment in the college a significant economic stimulus to the community that will generate employment in the region.

College president Jim Hamilton said the groundbreaking represents a milestone for the college, as it will be able to provide accessibility to training for all regions of the Okanagan Valley.



SCOTT TRUDEAU/The Okanagan Saturday

Okanagan College president Jim Hamilton addresses the crowd Friday at the official groundbreaking for the Centre of Excellence in Sustainable Building Technologies and Renewable Energy Conservation at the Penticton campus of Okanagan College.

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## Centre

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Hamilton said the college will be on the leading edge for training and technology related to green construction.

"The building will start to save about \$200,000 in annual costs," he said.

It is being built to exceed Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design standards and should achieve a net-zero energy consumption by incorporating building elements. However, construction costs for the state-of-the-art facility will be comparable to those for a conventional building.

In terms of its sustainability and the environmental elements in its design, the Centre of Excellence will open up opportunities for students by offering geothermal, on-site alternative energy sources and life-cycle site-management programs.

Once completed, the 7,000-square-metre facility will triple the size of the campus and be capable of accommodating an additional 800 students.