

NEWS RELEASE

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On-the-job training in all types of employment will be expanded and take on a new look in the Kamloops-Cariboo and Okanagan regions during the coming year as the resources of Cariboo College are brought into the picture.

Benjamin L. Eldridge, a Cariboo instructor in Heavy Duty Mechanics for the past eight years and recently Chairperson of Mechanics, has been seconded to assist employers who participate in the new Canada Manpower Industrial Training Program.

Under this program, established several years ago, the Federal Government pays a portion of the costs of training new employees and, in some cases, upgrading existing staff. Eldridge's duties will be to analyze the training needs, help set up the specific program, and provide expert advice for the person doing the actual training, anywhere in the regions served by Cariboo and Okanagan Colleges.

All types of business and industry may qualify for the program, Eldridge said, "from agriculture and heavy duty mechanics to hairdressing and food services". The key, he added, is to set up the most effective training program in each instance, whether it be at the job site or through College classes, or a combination of methods.

The program is province-wide, with other regional consultants located at Douglas College in Richmond, College of New Caledonia in Prince George, Malaspina College in Nanaimo and Selkirk College in Castlegar.

Eldridge will operate through the College's Department of Continuing Education for the coming year. He has now been succeeded as Mechanics Chairman by Leslie A. Batchelor, a Heavy Duty instructor.

Born and raised in Nova Scotia, Eldridge moved to Saskatchewan in 1949 to do farm work, and later spent eight years as an automobile and truck mechanic in North Battleford. He later moved to Edson, Alberta, as shop foreman, and in 1966 to Kelowna as service manager for an automotive dealership.

In 1968 he began teaching at the British Columbia Vocational School in Kelowna, later Okanagan College, and completed his Instructor's Certificate program at the University of British Columbia before coming to Cariboo College in 1972.

Since 1975 he has been Chairperson of the Mechanics Department, which now includes five programs, with nine full-time instructors. Eldridge makes his home in Kelowna.

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