

media release



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW NVIT/UCC CAMPUS OPENS DOORS TO STUDENTS JANUNARY 2, 2002

MERRITT—There will be a different view inside and out beginning this January for students of the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology and The University College of the Cariboo in Merritt.

A new campus, owned by NVIT and jointly shared by the two post secondary institutions, is now ready for occupancy after 15 months of construction to complete one of B.C.'s first green building design schools.

Located at the northeast side of the city on Belshaw Avenue, the 17-hectare sloped site houses a two-and-a-half story building, which incorporates business and technology, First Nations culture and environmentally friendly building features into 4,645 square-metres.

A green building is one designed, built, renovated, operated or reused in an ecological and resource-efficient way. Green buildings can be designed for any climate using the natural surroundings as indications for a starting point, said Alfred Waugh of Busby and Associates and the project architect for the Merritt project.

In the case of the NVIT/UCC campus, a weather station located on the roof of the \$5.8-million building has been incorporated into the mechanical control system inside the building. Outside temperature readings signal to the control system to automatically open and close the windows at the top of the central atrium. When individual office and classroom windows are opened natural ventilation occurs, as air will pass through the transition panels above each room's door.

"Above each door is a transition panel that allows fresh air to flow through and toward the centre of the building," said Project Manager Phil Hanmer of UCC Capital Planning and Projects.

In addition, more than 60 per cent of the windows have louver coverings made from yellow cedar that are moveable and adjustable to help control heat from sunlight.

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“Concrete material used in the structure helps to hold in the heat as well,” said Hanmer. “The idea of the green design is to cut down on heating and air conditioning costs.

One of the building’s most distinguishing features is the circular design, which is a recurring and meaningful theme in native culture. The structure is a semi-circle with the main entrance facing east, which is also symbolic for First Nations. Another distinguishing feature is a planted rooftop supporting the green design. The rooftop will serve as a location to conduct ethnobotany classes, the study of indigenous plants and their native uses.

Plans are in the works to construct a circular arbor at the rear of the building that would be used as a site for cultural and special events as well as graduation ceremonies.

Inside, there are 18 classrooms, faculty offices, social spaces, labs, a bookstore, cafeteria and library. First Nations themes are reflected throughout and include a circular fireplace in the foyer as well as several solid wood columns. Native carvings will adorn the front entrance when they are completed.

From an academic standpoint, the new facility will provide both NVIT and UCC the opportunity to recruit more students because of the added space as well as to introduce new programs.

“In conjunction with NVIT, we anticipate expanding our programming for full-time and part-time studies,” said Adrian Kershaw, UCC Vice-President, Community and Distributed Learning Services.

Programs and courses under consideration include adult basic education, English as a second language, home support/resident care aid, licenced practical nursing and human service worker as well as programs in trades and tourism.

For more information on the new Merritt Campus, please contact Janice Riley, Campus Coordinator, UCC Merritt Campus, at 250-378-2967.

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