
NEWS RELEASE

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Office of the Premier
Ministry of Advanced Education
Ministry of Energy and Mines

NEW \$12 MILLION CENTRE TO BOOST OIL AND GAS TRAINING

FORT ST. JOHN – Government is partnering with industry to build a new \$12 million centre for oil and gas excellence at the Fort St. John campus of Northern Lights College that will allow the college to more than double the number of students training for jobs in the oil and gas industry, Premier Gordon Campbell announced today.

“Our rapidly growing oil and gas sector is creating incredible job opportunities in Fort St. John and communities across the North,” Campbell said. “Northern Lights has done a great job of developing programs that meet the needs of the industry, but demand for those programs is outpacing the college’s capacity. Through this innovative partnership with EnCana and other industry partners, we will be able to expand those programs to ensure more of the jobs in B.C.’s oil and gas industry go to workers who live and are trained here in B.C.”

The Oil and Gas industry Training Centre of Excellence will support Northern Lights College’s plans to accommodate an additional 180 students in vocational, trades, career and technical programs related to the oil and gas training. Currently the college offers 117 spaces in those programs. Programs at Northern Lights College are developed in consultation and partnership with industry experts and graduates are frequently hired right out of the classroom.

“The Oil and Gas Centre for Excellence is being built on our Fort St. John campus because of the confidence the province and industry have in the quality of that training and in recognition of the potential to expand it,” said Jim Kassen, president of Northern Lights College.

The Province is providing \$6 million in capital funding towards the design and construction the \$12 million oil and gas training centre. EnCana Corporation is contributing \$3 million, and the remaining \$3 million for the project will come from additional industry sponsors to be announced at a later date. Construction is expected to begin in May.

“We are pleased to be partnering with the provincial government to create a new training centre for students in the oil and gas sector,” said Gwyn Morgan, president and CEO of EnCana Corporation. “The Oil and Gas Industry Training Centre of Excellence will benefit the economy by helping meet the high demand for skilled workers in this industry, while northern B.C. communities will benefit from an increase in steady employment and offshoot opportunities within the region.”

EnCana is the largest independent natural gas producer in North America with daily gas sales averaging 2.6 billion cubic feet per day in 2003.

“Our oil and gas industry is booming as a result of industry’s hard work and our Oil and Gas Strategy for the Heartlands,” said Energy and Mines Minister Richard Neufeld. “We are promoting B.C.’s tremendous opportunities by taking these important steps to ensure that both the province and industry have enough trained employees with up-to-date skill levels, and the latest in safety and technological training.”

“The new training centre at Northern Lights College will provide additional instructional space, expanded opportunities for student access to vocational labs and shops, and new programs,” said Advanced Education Minister Ida Chong. “By offering increased training capacity in the Northeast region, it will help meet industry’s training needs closer to home.”

In May, the province and the oil and gas industry also announced a partnership to establish a new Oil and Gas Education and Training Consortium made up of representatives from the industry, education institutions, government and aboriginal communities. The consortium provides strategic direction to ensure an adequate supply of trained workers for the oil and gas industry in northeastern B.C.

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