



## Local IT school achieves accreditation

On November 22, the Department of Education, Operation ONLINE and the Canadian Information Processing Society (CIPS) awarded national accreditation to the Information Technology (IT) Graduate Diploma program of the Graduate Centre of Applied Technology (GCAT).

"This is an exciting day," said acting Education Minister Lloyd Matthews. "GCAT's IT Graduate Diploma program is the first IT program in a private college in the country to receive national accreditation."

The provincial Department of Education, Operation ONLINE, and CIPS signed a memorandum of agreement in 1999 to develop a process for the accreditation of IT programs offered through provincial educational institutions. Since then, these partners have been working together with the IT industry and post-secondary institutions to see this project through to completion. Sandy Eaton, CIPS National Atlantic Director, said that such partnerships may open the door to accreditation in other provinces.

"We are extremely proud to be the first training institution in Newfoundland and Labrador and the first private college in Canada to receive CIPS accreditation for our IT Graduate Diploma program," said Calvin Burton, president of GCAT.

The accreditation project was funded through the Labour Market Development Agreement, a joint initiative of the provincial and federal governments that seeks to link educational, employment and economic development initiatives for an improved labour market. ☞

## Government to increase parental LEAVE entitlement

Environment and Labour Minister Oliver Langdon announced on November 21 that government will introduce legislation to amend the Labour Standards Act to give parents the option of taking up to a year off to care for their newborns and adopted children.

Legislation will be tabled during the fall session of the House of Assembly to increase the parental leave provision of the Labour Standards Act from the current 12 weeks to 35 weeks. This change, coupled with the current 17 week leave provisions provided for maternity and adoption, will enable parents to stay at home for up to one year with job protection.

Earlier this year, the federal government amended the Employment Insurance Act to provide a maximum of 50 weeks combined maternity and parental benefits, after a two week waiting period, rather than the current 25 week maximum.

The Labour Standards Act determines the minimum terms and conditions of employment in the province. This change in the Labour Standards Act will take effect on December 31, 2000. ☞

## Info sessions on tax credit programs

Government will begin information sessions on a new government venture capital investment program on Tuesday, November 28. In total, 29 sessions will be held in communities across Newfoundland and Labrador.

The sessions will be held across the province until the middle of December and provide information about the Direct Equity Tax Credit program, one of two venture capital tax credit investment programs announced on October 30 by Ernie McLean, acting Minister of Development and Rural Renewal, and Lloyd Matthews, Minister of Finance.

The program is designed to encourage Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to invest in local small businesses. Those who invest in local small businesses can claim 20 or 35 per cent of the cost of their investment against their provincial personal income tax, depending on the location of the business in which they invest.

The information sessions will provide an opportunity for both investors and small businesses to learn about the details of the program. For more information about the sessions, go to [www.gov.nf.ca/venturecap](http://www.gov.nf.ca/venturecap) ☞

