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In collaboration with the Town of Olds,
Mountain View County and
the University of Alberta

CLC works to manage inflationary challenges

At a recent meeting, the CLC Governance Team was pleased to hear that the CLC is doing well in managing inflationary pressures. Funding sources have been identified for all but \$3.8 million of the \$57 million project. In addition, construction and tendering processes are moving forward.

"We are achieving so many milestones with the CLC," said Dot Negropontes, Executive Director. "Construction is underway with the eLearning Core and the Bus Maintenance Facility will soon be underway. Construction is proceeding within our planned schedule and is falling very closely within our budget projections, despite the inflationary challenges resulting from Alberta's booming economy. Through a modification in our original building designs, which was accomplished without compromising our program plans, we are containing

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Preparing Students for Life After Graduation

"When everyone asks me what I'm going to do with my life, I know what to say," says Brett Dorowicz, grade 12 Olds High School student, with a grin on his face. Proudly, Brett announces, "I'm going to be a welder."

Brett says he made the decision as a result of enrolling in a one semester opportunity for high school students to participate in a pre-trades course in welding at Olds College. "My Mom told me about the class and thought I should just try it. I wasn't sure if I'd like it, but I signed up. It was interesting and fun. I liked the projects and putting things together."



Olds High School student, Brett Dorowicz

Thirteen Chinook's Edge students from Olds, Sundre and Cremona enrolled in the first-of-its-kind course, taking theoretical and hands-on training every afternoon from February until June 2006 from Olds College instructors on the Olds College campus. Students attended their home schools in the morning for academic classes.

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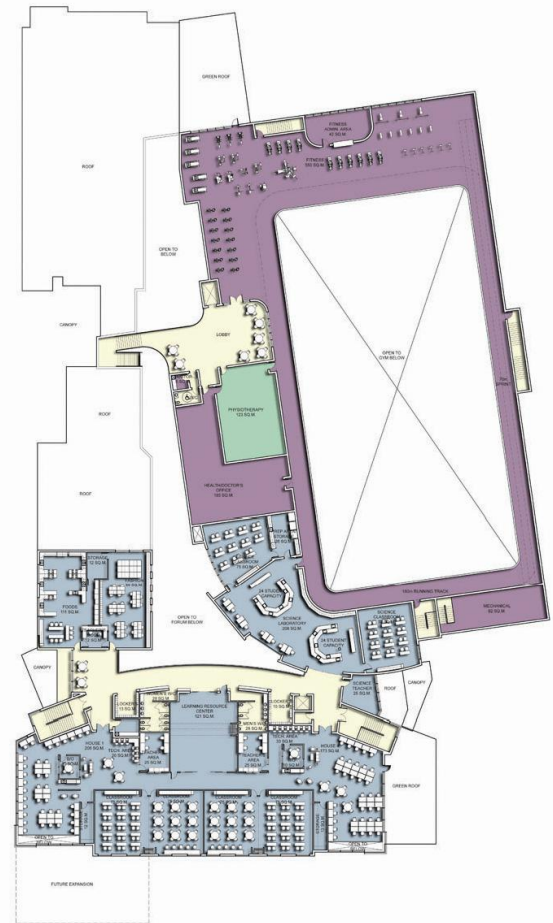
Core High School A Home for Thinkers

Building a high school without halls is one of Tom Christensen's goals.

"Our desire was to create a home for thinkers," said Christensen, Olds High School Principal, who has worked with architects to design the CLC's core high school. "Social issues common to high school aged students throughout North America often appear in hallways. There are better uses of space than the traditional hall. Learning, thinking, developing – are the things we set out to



Architectural rendering of Core High School and Health & Wellness facility. The lower portion of the facility is the Core High School, the upper portion is the Health & Wellness facility. Above: main floor. Right: second floor.



emphasize in the design, by creating appropriate spaces that encourage these types of activities."

Christensen is pleased with the final design. He said the variety of learning spaces and the way they are grouped will allow staff and students to work well together, ensuring students have a positive experience at school.

"Students need to feel safe and cared for so they learn well. Where do students feel safest?" asked Christensen. "At home," was his answer. "The physical design of the core high school will allow us to arrange activities as well as individuals and groups to replicate students' homes."

The design includes a variety of spaces, including classrooms with operable walls allowing for larger

learning spaces or smaller, more traditional classrooms. There are big open areas where furniture will be used to arrange for different "home like" groupings such as chairs around tables, couches, individual desks, and conversation areas. There is also a large gathering space; a "forum", which will serve a multitude of purposes.

Additionally, when students move from the current facility to the core high school, staff and students will be grouped together in "families" for two years. "Seven teachers and about 120 students will make up a family,"

said Christensen. "This will provide for additional teacher – student interactions and in the end, stronger relationships and more teacher-student mentoring and support."

Christensen said the way the new facility is designed, "it will be easy for teachers to be among the students. And students will be able to find the spaces where learning becomes the most comfortable."

Olds High School staff are excited about the core high school. "Staff members are eager. They have embraced the design and

the project-based approach to teaching and learning," said Christensen. "Staff know it is a privilege to create a new learning environment, and they'll be pleased about the positive impact it will have on students."

The high school, as one of the five CLC buildings, will be home to grades 9 through twelve students by late in 2008.

"Students will be able to find the spaces where learning becomes the most comfortable."

Tom Christensen,
Principal, Olds High School

Future Student Success Focus of Teaching Approach

In an ever changing world, how do you prepare students for success? Discussion and professional development at Olds High School are focused on finding the answer.

"It's a different world compared to 10, 20 or 30 years ago," said Tom Christensen, Principal, Olds High School. "Technology and the increased amount of information available have changed the way the world operates and what employers will expect. When we send our graduates into the world, they need to be thinkers, have the ability to solve problems and know how to work with people."

Christensen said staff are utilizing an approach to teaching and learning that will ensure graduates are prepared. "Project Based Learning" means teachers provide assignments that are meaningful to students and, according to Christensen, "leave the learner feeling that they've contributed something."

Conventionally, an assignment would be to read a section of material and answer a number of questions listed at the end. Project



OHS students, working on a project

based learning reverses the process. A teacher first starts with a question, or works with students to formulate a question, and then acts as a guide for students as they search for material that will answer the question.

Project based learning also involves integrating subjects. Teachers give students cross-curricular assignments whenever

possible, helping students make connections between their assignments and the real world.

For example, students could be assigned a project to look at a particular geographic area. They would be asked to examine the history of the area, provide population information, examine the geography of the land as well as environmental features such as water and soil health. Math, science, social studies and English skills would all be utilized and various curricular goals achieved.

Christensen said the newly designed core high school, along with the other facilities that make up the Community Learning Campus, will greatly contribute to his staff's ability to utilize a project based learning approach.

"We already believe in this teaching approach," said Christensen. "It is successful and is only limited by our current facility. What's exciting is that the new core high school has been designed to accommodate our program needs instead of vice-versa.

"It's a great time to work in education. We're thrilled with what this means for our students and their future successes."

CLC manages inflationary pressures...

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our budget overrun to a small percentage of overall costs. Our partners in the Alberta government tell us they are pleased with our fiscal responsibility."

Anticipated cost of the CLC is \$57 million, of which the provincial government has provided \$38.2 million. Funding sources have been identified to cover all but \$3.8 million of the total cost. The entire CLC project includes the Core High School, Fine Arts & Multi-Media Centre, eLearning Core, Health and Wellness facility, and Chinook's Edge School Division Bus Maintenance Facility which will be built on the Olds College campus.

"Creating a facility of this magnitude creates so many appealing opportunities for all residents," said Mary Turner, who was recently invited by the Chinook's Edge School Board to sit on the CLC Governance Team as a parent representative from the Olds High School Council.

"My son will have graduated but my daughter will be in grade 10 when the CLC is scheduled to open in 2008, and I am so pleased she will have the benefit of these great educational opportunities. There is so much potential with the CLC and I see nothing but enormous opportunities for our kids, our seniors and our entire community."

Mary Turner has volunteered in leadership roles for large community projects in the past. She was Chair of the Alberta Seniors Games in 1999, volunteered as fundraising Chair of the Olds and District Pool 2000 committee, and was a Director on the Olds and District Chamber of Commerce when it first began. Her husband, Dr. Steven Turner, has been a family physician in Olds for the past 13 years, and Mary has been an active recruiter to draw physicians to the community. She works as a substitute teacher for Chinook's Edge School Division.

Preparing Students...

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Brett's mother, Sandy Dorowicz was impressed. "It was an amazing program and awesome opportunity for Brett," said Sandy. "He's not finished high school yet, but he knows where he's going with his life. For a lot of kids, that's hard. Brett won't struggle with that. He'll just be able to move forward and build a successful career."

Brett is continuing to build up his experience in welding through his grade 12 year. Upon graduation, he plans to enroll in Red Deer College's welding program. Because of his work through Olds College, he'll have to invest less time, and won't have to spend as much on tuition. The course work he completed at Olds College has moved him forward about one year towards fulfilling the requirements to become a journeyman welder, which is typically a three year process.



Brett Dorowicz with pre-welding instructor Dan Daley

"We're giving students a head start," said Pat Bidart, Associate Vice President, Academic Services, Olds College. "That's what's meant by 'seamless transition' - one of the aims of the Community Learning Campus (CLC). When students see how to successfully make the step from high school to post secondary education, apprenticeship or the work force, we've achieved a major CLC goal."

The welding program is the first of many programs that will achieve the CLC's vision. In the future, this type of 'head start' training will be offered in a number of fields, possibly including carpentry, floristry, mechanics and more.



Bidart said educators involved in the development of the vision are passionate about this aspect of the CLC. "There are so many possibilities," said Bidart. "We're looking at a list of programs, working to see how we can offer opportunities to students." Bidart said not only will the students benefit, but the community will benefit as well. "If we can show students how to be successful in careers right here in Central Alberta, it will make our communities stronger."

In Brett Dorowicz's mind the future is bright, and his mother looks forward to seeing her son progress. Sandy Dorowicz said, "He's got the confidence now. For us to see him this exited... that's great. We're really happy."

For Further Information about the **Community Learning Campus** please contact:

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