

## **COMMUNITY PROVIDES POSITIVE RESPONSE TO FACILITY AND PROGRAM PLANS**

**For Immediate Release**

**February 23, 2005**

About 150 Olds and district residents got their first look, Tuesday evening, at what the proposed Community Learning Campus (CLC) might look like. Residents were welcomed to an open house at the Olds College Student Alumni Centre, where they could view the newly developed site plan, elevations and architectural renderings of proposed buildings, and a 3-D model of the entire site. Also, they were given an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback.

“We were very excited to show what we have developed to this point,” said Jim Gibbons, Superintendent, Chinook’s Edge School Division No. 73 (CESD). “The response was extremely positive. We heard people’s enthusiasm for the proposed facilities and programs. They see what we see, that this is a real opportunity for learners of all ages.”

Kathy Doyle, a mother of four children who have gone through Chinook’s Edge Schools, said she’s pleased that this type and size of facility is being considered for Olds. Doyle said, “This is an amazing opportunity. It can only help the community grow. It can only benefit the kids. At the end of the day, the kids will be the big winners. This community is poised and ready for this facility. It’s long overdue.”

The last public meeting was on January 6, 2005. At that time, a vision for the CLC was shared. That vision included providing a seamless transition for students from high school into the workplace, apprenticeship, college or university. Also, it outlined strategies for providing opportunities for students to remain in rural Alberta if that’s what they choose to do. Offering options to rural students links to the province’s priorities for sustainability in rural Alberta as described in “*A Place to Grow*”, a provincial document describing a new rural development strategy.

The site plan shows a core high school located on the south end of the Olds College campus. The core high school is physically linked to a health and wellness center that will contain gymnasiums, as well as other facilities such as a daycare and children’s services. Adjacent to the core high school and health and wellness centre is a fine arts centre that will provide space for high school music and theatre programs, and community use as well. An e-learning centre is proposed to share a renovated space with the current student alumni center.

Following the January 6<sup>th</sup> meeting, several committees were formed, made up of community stakeholders. Stakeholders took information provided to them from the public meetings to develop program plans and facility plans. The meeting on February 22, 2005 provided the first opportunity for the general public to view the plans that have been developed. In addition, residents were given an opportunity to provide their comments either to CLC representatives in person, or on a comment card.

Some of the main themes from the comment cards included enthusiasm for the potential for public use of facilities such as the health and wellness center, and the fine arts centre. Residents also commented they want the CLC plan to ensure the facilities address the needs of the community well into the future.

**COMMUNITY**  
learningcampus

Room 810  
Learning Resource Center  
4500 - 50th Street  
Olds, Alberta T4H 1R6

T: 403.556.4762  
F: 403.556.4704  
Cell: 403.556.0606  
ggough@admin.oldscollege.ab.ca

**Gary E Gough**  
Project Coordinator  
Community Learning Campus  
Steering Committee



“I think it’s a wonderful concept,” said Linda Bell, an Olds resident. “It’s an opportunity for the community to work together on something. It’s a win-win.” David Bell said, “It’s something we can be proud of.”

Al Kemmere, Reeve, Mountain View County feels the strength of the CLC is that it serves learners in Olds and beyond, providing opportunities for rural students and strengthening rural communities. Kemmere said, “The CLC plans reach out beyond Olds to make sure all kids have opportunities. It will provide balanced opportunities for all learners. I just think about the impact on the community in the future for students and their families. This is a community builder and a good way of strengthening families. It’s exciting.”

Comments from the February 22 meeting will be taken into account for the next phase of development. That will occur when the provincial government gives approval.

The key date is March 15, 2005, when the proposal that has been developed over the past few months will go to Alberta Infrastructure for its approval. The cost of the project is currently estimated to be between \$40 – 44 million.

“Olds College, Chinook’s Edge and all of our community partners have worked together to get to this point,” said Rob Mackenzie, Vice President, Student & Support Services, Olds College. “We’re proud of the results to date. We’ve got a proposal that will see facilities and programs that work hand in hand to provide a wide array of opportunities for learners of all ages. We’re eager to see the government gives its approval.”

Judy Dahl, Mayor, Olds, said she’s so impressed with the plans that she has no doubt the government will move forward with the CLC. “The CLC opens the doors to the world. I’m thrilled that the Olds region gets to be a part of it. This will happen. It’s the only way to go.”

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For more information contact:

Jim Gibbons  
Superintendent  
Chinook’s Edge School Division No.73  
(403) 227-7070  
[jgibbons@chinooksedge.ab.ca](mailto:jgibbons@chinooksedge.ab.ca)

Rob Mackenzie  
Vice President Student & Support Services  
Olds College  
(403) 556-8302  
[rmackenzie@oldscollege.ca](mailto:rmackenzie@oldscollege.ca)

Kerry Moynihan, Director  
Marketing and Government Relations  
Olds College Advancement  
1-800-661-6537, (403) 507-7710  
[kmoynihan@oldscollege.ca](mailto:kmoynihan@oldscollege.ca)

Laurette Woodward  
Communications Officer  
Chinook’s Edge School Division  
(403) 227-7085, (403) 391-3220 (cell)  
[lwoodward@chinooksedge.ab.ca](mailto:lwoodward@chinooksedge.ab.ca)

- **Photos of February 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting available upon request**
- **Digital copies of site plan and some elevations available upon request**