

Opportunities continue to grow as CLC celebrates first anniversary

For immediate release: March 16, 2011 – All of the Community Learning Campus facilities have been open for a full year now, and the priority to expand opportunities and partnerships is stronger than ever.

When a pre-employment Carpentry program got underway at Olds College this semester it marked a significant milestone, as every single high school in Chinook's Edge School Division had officially taken part in the Dual Credit programs being developed through the CLC. This distinctive approach to learning allows high school students to earn credit at both the high school and college levels.

"We are finding the Dual Credit programs are as exciting for our Olds College faculty as they are for the high school students who are learning from them," said Pat Bidart, Olds College Associate Vice President Academic. "When I hear the enthusiastic comments from our students and their parents, I know we are achieving what we set out to do through the CLC. Here we are, celebrating the first full year of operation and I would say the CLC has brought strong, relevant and unique learning opportunities within reach of everyone in the region."

The CLC has made its mark by pioneering unique programming and forming influential partnerships, to reach residents well beyond the typical learning communities served by Olds College and Chinook's Edge. It has abolished geographical barriers so that all rural residents have access to rich lifelong learning opportunities through Community Engagement Sites. Over 5,000 people have now taken part in 137 different topics offered through Community Engagement Sites, which link rural communities to the expertise and technology of the CLC. Some have accessed formal courses to advance their careers, while others have discovered parenting techniques or joined a virtual book club. High School students in small communities have accessed advanced Math and Physics classes through videoconferencing at their local Community Engagement Site, while business people have learned to build their own websites. Community Engagement Sites host everything from author readings to law programs.

The CLC is impacting rural learning for both students and adults, and this has caught the attention of education professionals throughout the province. The Calgary Board of Education is now working with Chinook's Edge and Olds College to develop a farm safety course that will be made available online to students in the city and throughout Chinook's Edge. This new course combines the efforts of the province's largest urban board and its largest rural board, along with the expertise of Olds College. It will impact students across Alberta when it becomes shared with other jurisdictions this spring.

"For Chinook's Edge, the CLC is about making high school purposeful, meaningful and relevant for our students," said Lee Tipman, Division Principal and Coordinator of the Health Pathways program, which is leading the farm safety course. "Students throughout our division are discovering college courses while still in high school, they are experiencing many different types of courses and careers as they discover their career path, and then they are transitioning easily into post-secondary or the next stage of their work. All of the thought that went into developing the CLC is coming to fruition. People have worked hard and taken chances, but the CLC has only been open for a year and it is already offering some of the premier programs in the nation."

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