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\$26.4 MILLION BOOST TO POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

Renovations and Expansions in Regina, Saskatoon, Swift Current, Prince Albert, Muenster

The provincial government is investing \$26.4 million in four post-secondary institutions as part of the \$500 million "economic booster shot" announced by Premier Brad Wall earlier this week.

"Saskatchewan's prosperity and quality of life depends on educating our young people," Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour Rob Norris said. "This investment will help hundreds of Saskatchewan people pursue training opportunities and provide a much needed boost to our economy."

\$7.85 million in renovations at the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIASST) will support the expansion of training opportunities for Saskatchewan people.

Today, Norris and Health Minister Don McMorris attended an event at SIASST's Wascana Campus in Regina, where the nurse education program is expanding to help meet the government's commitment to work towards the goal of creating 300 new Registered Nurse education seats by 2011.

A portion of the new funding provided to SIASST will pay for renovations to classrooms and laboratories and enhancements to faculty, administration and student space. The government has already invested more than \$6 million in phase one of the project, which included the construction of a state-of-the-art 300-seat lecture theatre.

"Recruiting and retaining nurses is a top priority for this government," McMorris said. "Today's announcement is good news for the province because it will allow us to train more nurses right here at home."

SIASST will also renovate its Wascana Campus to offer plumbing apprenticeship training in Regina. SIASST's Woodland Campus in Prince Albert will be renovated to accommodate expanded training opportunities for electricians.

The other institutions receiving funding:

- The Great Plains College will renovate its main campus in Swift Current. The project involves upgrades of classrooms, offices and common areas, an overhaul of the facility's mechanical and electrical systems, and installation of new cooling and sprinkler systems. The institution is a regional college serving southwest Saskatchewan. Its main campus was built in 1948 and has never undergone a major renovation.
- St. Peter's College in Muenster will undertake renovations to support a number of new and existing programs and partnerships with the goal of enhancing the learning environment. St. Peter's is a private institution affiliated with the University of Saskatchewan.
- The Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT) will develop video conferencing capacity at its Saskatoon campus and redevelop the building to allow for more effective support for mentoring and coaching services.

Norris said the province continues to experience a shortage of skilled labour. He said the province's technical institutes and regional colleges are essential to ensuring Saskatchewan can maintain its economic momentum.

"These institutions are extremely important to our economy. Each year they train thousands of people in a range of occupations. If this province is to realize its tremendous potential, we need to invest in skills development and academic training."

This \$26.4 million investment in infrastructure for post-secondary facilities is in addition to the \$145.4 million already announced for post-secondary capital this fiscal year.

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