



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Town of Drayton Valley and NLC make post-secondary education accessible in rural Alberta

Drayton Valley, Alberta (October 14, 2021): The Town of Drayton Valley is excited to announce that on September 21, 2021, a multi-year lease for space at the Clean Energy Technology Centre (CETC) was signed between Northern Lakes College and the Town of Drayton Valley. This agreement brings Northern Lakes College Supported Distance Learning programming to the CETC, continuing the Town's pursuit of accessible education for rural Albertans.

Dedicated classroom space has been allocated for students at the CETC, including those enrolled in Northern Lakes College programs. Offering classroom space for distance learning students ensures reliable access to internet and support for rural students who may not otherwise have the option to pursue online education. This arrangement also provides more opportunities for students who wish to stay in the community while pursuing post-secondary education.

There are currently 14 students enrolled in 12 different Northern Lakes College programs studying at the CETC, seven of whom are being sponsored by the Town's Zero Fee Tuition Program. This program, launched in 2020, and the first of its kind in Canada, encourages students to pursue their post-secondary goals while remaining in the community, saving students and families money and making education more accessible.

"The numbers speak for themselves in telling the NLC accessibility story. Our Supported Distance Learning model means that we don't need a full cohort of students in any specific program to make it accessible in a community," comments Dr. Glenn Mitchell, President & CEO of Northern Lakes College. "Drayton Valley students will participate in classes with students from throughout Alberta. This dedication to accessibility is why, at Northern Lakes College, we count our success one student at a time."

In addition, Northern Lakes College has hired a local, part-time Access Facilitator to support their Drayton Valley students and to be the point of contact for students wishing to access the many support options available. The Town is pleased to partner with Northern Lakes College to facilitate local jobs and make education more accessible to rural communities.

"This is an exciting step forward for our community" commented Mayor Michael Doerksen. "The signing of a multi-year lease provides security for our local students and solidifies the Town's commitment to providing accessible education to our residents. We look forward to facilitating further post-secondary options and continuing to bring big opportunities closer to home."

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