

## Strong Partnerships and Changing Economy Drive Urgent Need for Government Support of New Ottawa Valley Algonquin College Campus

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Pembroke, ON, May 5, 2009** – Algonquin College in the Ottawa Valley is urging the Federal government to address the unique economic and educational challenges facing rural communities by committing \$13 million from the *Knowledge Infrastructure Program* for a new Algonquin campus in downtown Pembroke.

“Support for this new campus is extremely strong in the College and in the community,” says Robert Gillett, President of Algonquin College. “A community capital campaign has already committed over \$1 million, the City of Pembroke has made land available to the college for the new site, and our Students’ Association has pledged \$4 million to provide amenities such as a fitness centre.”

The new campus, appropriately named Renaissance Square, will address the educational, economic development, and community needs of Renfrew County. Among other benefits, the new facility will provide:

- Increased access to education for rural residents;
- Revitalization of historic downtown Pembroke;
- Short and long-term job creation;
- Increased tourism potential for Renfrew County.

“This shovel-ready project will provide the community with an attractive, multi-use, [LEED-Gold](#) certified facility,” says Karen Davies, Dean of Algonquin College in the Ottawa Valley. “College campuses are often used for training and development by private and public sector organizations during the summer, which will bring thousands of tourism dollars to Renfrew County each year.”

Set on the banks of the Ottawa River, Renaissance Square will go beyond traditional full-time college programming by expanding adult learning and literacy opportunities, increasing research opportunities in Renfrew County, and providing Renfrew County’s students with a leading-edge learning environment unique to the region.

“The current campus has no room for expansion,” adds Davies. “As well, the nearly 100 year-old building is making it difficult to provide students with the learning environments of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which can cause many local youth to move away from Renfrew County because their own hometown campus can’t fulfill their learning needs.”

The proposed 91,000-square-foot facility will house state-of-the-art facilities for skilled-trades, health care and hospitality education, and will create a minimum of 300 new full time spaces, bringing the full-time enrolment to over 1,000 students.

Applications at the Pembroke campus are at an all-time high, and are expected to continue to grow over the next several years. The limited space in the nearly 100-year-old facility has required the College to put enrolment caps on high-demand programs such as health care and skilled trades. Lanark residents are now looking elsewhere for post-secondary education because the campus has reached capacity.

The total cost of this project is \$36 million and the College has asked for financial support from all levels of government. The City of Pembroke has already contributed a \$1 million parcel of land, and Algonquin has asked the federal and provincial governments for funding to the tune of \$13 million each. The College, the community, and the Algonquin Students’ Association will cover the final \$9 million of the total price tag.

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