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LEADING ON AND OFF ICE  
Bulldogs captains work as a team.

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# Alberni Valley NEWS

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## NIC receives trades funding

Port Alberni campus granted \$187,000 by the Province of B.C.

**KATYA SLEPIAN**  
ALBERNI VALLEY NEWS

The provincial government has granted North Island College \$187,000 for new trades equipment last month—money that will be put to good use.

“North Island College is the leading trades training provider for students across the region, from Ucluelet to Port Hardy and beyond,” said NIC president John Bowman.

“This new equipment will help ensure North Island students continue to graduate with the skills and knowledge needed work in industries close to home and across B.C.”

The province has invested over \$1 million in NIC’s trades programs since spring 2014.

According to NIC media liaison Christiana Wiens, that



Automotive instructor Patrick Belfry supervises a student performing a wheel alignment at the Port Alberni campus.

includes \$123,008 of new equipment at the Port Alberni campus

in the past two years. That funding has been put to good

use by the welding department who received a \$39,970

CNC plasma cutter and \$6,500 mill hog.

Cont'd on A3

## Charges dismissed

**JOHN MCKINLEY**  
BLACK PRESS

Sexual assault charges against a Port Alberni man lodged following a football road trip to Denver have been dropped.

The Denver District Attorney’s office announced the decision in a media release Monday.

“New information developed in this case that led to a determination that those charges could no longer be proven beyond a reasonable doubt,” the release states. “They were dismissed today.”

Colby James Messer, 30, was charged last April with six counts of sexual assault following an incident at a Denver hotel. Four of those charges were then dropped in August after a preliminary hearing.

He pleaded not guilty on Oct. 3 to two counts of

sexual assault and overcoming the victim’s will.

According to Colorado court documents, Messer was accused of assaulting a 27-year-



**COLBY MESSER**

old female late at night on Nov. 14, 2015 at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Denver.

In statements to the police, the victim said she had been drinking with Messer and several of his companions before ending up in the hotel room, adding that she did not know how she got there.

Cont'd on A6

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«COVER STORY



KATYA SLEPIAN / ALBERNI VALLEY NEWS PHOTOS



The plasma cutter, above, cuts metal at the NIC Port Alberni campus. A NIC joinery student, right, uses a newly purchased edge sander at the Port Alberni campus.

# State-of-the-art tools boost NIC's programs

From A1  
The new equipment is making a difference to welding student John Colvin.  
"It just gives you a little bit of an advantage if the company has newer equipment," he said.  
"You can go set up a machine without looking foolish. Old machines were just 'turn on, turn off, set a dial,' now you have to figure out different configurations."  
The college's joinery department has also received upgrades—a \$24,238 sliding panel saw and \$15,000 edge sander.  
"Students come from all over

**It just gives you a little bit of an advantage if the company has newer equipment... you can go set up a machine without looking foolish.**

— John Colvin

Canada to take the program," said joinery instructor Stephen McIntosh.  
"The program is

nine months long and at this point we're working with hand tools and then from there we'll progress up to small machines and then the big machines."

Students taking the automotive program also got a boost, thanks to an Ohm's Law circuit trainer (\$12,400) and high tech wheel alignment system (\$24,900).

The circuit trainer allows students to practice their skills.

"We've got all kinds of component and jumper wires and built in meters. We can activate circuits with it, dial up different voltage levels with

it, change bulb brightness. I've got seven of them with it," said instructor Patrick Balfry, noting that the circuit trainers have one big advantage.

"If the students do something wrong, they won't blow anything up."

Wheel alignment has also gotten a little bit more high tech at NIC.

"This is a piece of equipment that is industry standard at all the high end car dealerships—Porsche, BMW, those kinds of places," said Balfry.

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Welding instructor Ivan Peterson holds up a project produced by the department's plasma cutter.

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