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Lakeland College's transformed WHT Mead Building open for innovation

(Vermilion, Alta.) In a unique blend of technological sophistication and agricultural tradition, Lakeland College celebrated the grand opening of the rejuvenated WHT Mead Building at the Vermilion campus on Wednesday, Sept. 28. A milestone in campus renewal, the facility is home to more than 600 agricultural sciences students perfecting the practical skills Lakeland graduates are known for and industry wants.

The 35,214 sq. ft. WHT Mead Building features collaboration spaces, labs, classrooms and faculty offices for the School of Agricultural Sciences and applied research. Technology is infused throughout the building for in-person and virtual learning. It's also home to the Student-Managed Farm – Powered by New Holland headquarters, which is a planning space for animal science technology and crop technology students who manage Lakeland's crop, livestock and research units.

The Government of Alberta invested \$17.3 million to rejuvenate the WHT Mead Building, which was originally constructed in 1964. Synergy Credit Union also contributed to the new interactive learning space, gifting \$150,000 to the project.

"We're thrilled to celebrate this much-needed investment in campus renewal with the opening of the WHT Mead Building. Thank you to the Government of Alberta for continuing to see and support the value of a Lakeland education. We're also grateful for the support of Synergy Credit Union," says Dr. Alice Wainwright-Stewart, president and CEO of Lakeland. "Today's celebration is about more than classrooms. It's about ensuring our students have the facilities to learn and collaborate, to build foundational skills and grow their expertise to go beyond the classroom and put their education into action. It's about ensuring our graduates are ready to thrive and drive innovation as leaders throughout commercial agriculture sectors, creating a sustainable future for this vital industry and our region."

Designed to today's energy modelling codes and requirements, the WHT Mead Building was built to accommodate future enrolment growth. Over the past 12 years, enrolment in agricultural sciences programs has increased 200 per cent.

"At Lakeland, we are committed to developing talent for the agricultural sectors, and we do that through an award-winning work-integrated learning model. The WHT Mead Building offers the learning spaces we need to sustain program growth and foster classroom innovation," says Geoff Brown, dean of the School of Agricultural Sciences. "This new building represents the future of agricultural sciences at Lakeland. It's a blend of modern elements with the sleek new edge of technology that we know is influencing agriculture every day. It is going to have an enormous impact on our students now and in the future."

The WHT Mead Building is an academic hub for more than agricultural sciences programs. More than 200 environmental sciences and human services students will also access the classrooms. Continuing education courses, community meetings, and industry-hosted events will also be held in WHT Mead Building.

Investing in Campus Renewal

Lakeland prioritizes campus renewal and expansion. In the last six years, Lakeland completed the following projects at the Vermilion campus with the support of donors, government and funding partners:

- 2016-17: Lakeland opened the modernized G.N. Sweet Livestock Research Facility, which features state-of-the-art technology for livestock research and development.

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- 2017: The college's 46,600 sq. ft. Dairy Learning Centre opened. It features a robotic and traditional milk parlour, a robotic feeder, among other new technologies.
- 2018: The new Animal Health Clinic opened, reflecting an operational veterinary clinic with state-of-the-art technology and allowing Lakeland to double enrolment in two programs.
- 2019: The Trades Centre exterior and roofing repair project was completed.
- 2019: Generous donor support enabled Lakeland to expand the campus farm with 309 acres of quality cropland.
- 2019-20: Phase 1 of the Vermilion Campus Revitalization plan was completed with renovations done in Alumni Hall's Student Services, Learning Commons and Information Technology areas, as well as Academic Link student labs.
- 2020: A historic gift allowed Lakeland to further expand the campus farm and establish a bison herd.
- 2021: Lakeland officially opened the Agriculture Technology Centre, which is home to Canada's first degree in agriculture technology.

Lakeland's School of Agricultural Sciences programs include agribusiness, agricultural sustainability, animal health technology, animal science technology (beef, dairy, equine and livestock majors), bachelor of agriculture technology, crop technology, general agriculture, post-bachelor commercial agriculture production and veterinary medical assistant.

About Lakeland

Lakeland's agricultural sciences programming prepares graduates to make an impact in commercial agriculture and animal health. Programs are integrated with real-world learning situations and new technologies. With access to modern ag facilities, hundreds of head of livestock and 3,000+ acres, the real world comes to students before they graduate.

Lakeland's Research Centre is a test-bed for innovations in agriculture and the applied research team is driven by one goal: advancing real-world agricultural productivity and sustainability in key commercial crop and livestock species and agriculture technology. For more information visit lakelandcollege.ca.

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