



MEDIA RELEASE

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COMMUNITY SERVICE LEARNING RESULTS IN ENHANCED WEBSITE FOR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

TIMMINS – Northern College has adopted a community service learning education model that has students actively involved in their curriculum while enhancing their awareness of their community and their role in it. An example of how service learning can benefit communities and local businesses was presented today with the official launch of the Timmins Chamber of Commerce's new online gift shop.

Computer Engineering Technology – Science Professor, Neal McNair, noticed the gift shop page on the Chamber's website and felt that its enhancement would be an ideal project for his students.

The second-year Computer Science students created a searchable, categorized gift shop page that makes it easy for shoppers to browse the items the Timmins Chamber of Commerce has for sale in its gift shop. They also created a shopping cart system to allow the public to order items online, and an administration system that makes it easy for the Chamber staff to add and modify items on the site. The new system is a great improvement over the static web page the Chamber had previously, and it will prove to be an important addition to the Chamber's website.

Working with the Timmins Chamber of Commerce was a natural fit. The College has long been a Chamber member. As a not-for-profit organization, the Chamber was looking for a cost-effective way to improve its online gift shop page, and the students were happy to get a real project to work on.

"The Chamber would like to thank Northern College for thinking of us," said 2006-07 Chamber President Ken Petersen. "We always enjoy partnering with the College and have once again reaped the benefits of working with highly-skilled students."

"The students really benefit from experience such as this. It gives them the chance to apply what they have learned in class and to demonstrate that they have the skills to solve real-world business problems," said Professor McNair.

Service learning, which differs from field placements and internships, can work for communities and positively affect the local social economy. This type of learning connects academic work with personal lives and it demands the engagement of well-designed and real partnerships between communities and Northern College. Community service learning strengthens the College's links with the communities it serves.

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