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Ontario Marine Operators Association and Georgian College announce Centre of Excellence for Recreational Boating

Georgian College and the Ontario Marine Operators Association (OMOA) have announced plans to create a Centre of Excellence for Recreational Boating at Georgian's Midland Campus.

Mike McKeown, OMOA President and Linda Waddell, Vice President of the National Marine Manufacturers Association, together with Georgian College President and CEO Brian Tamblyn, officially launched a major campaign to help train students for the marine industry. The announcement was made Dec. 6 during the OMOA convention at Deerhurst Resort in Huntsville.

The campaign, called "5 x 10" – 500 students by 2010 – aims to raise a total of \$500,000. The two industry associations kicked off the campaign with major pledges: The OMOA will donate \$50,000 and the NMMA will donate \$100,000.

The new centre of excellence, scheduled to open its doors in the fall of 2007, will cost about \$1.25 million.

The recreational marine industry in Ontario, which continues to experience strong growth, faces a looming skills shortage as many people currently working in the field will retire soon.

"I believe the recreational boating industry will strongly support this new campaign to help solve the long-term skills shortage," said Al Donaldson, Executive Director of the OMAO. "Working closely with Georgian College and other stakeholders, our association has created a long-term strategic plan to help solve our training needs. A major part of this plan includes an increased emphasis on apprenticeship training and recruitment of students to our industry."

Brian Tamblyn said the OMOA will be a strong partner in an important campaign.

"The Ontario recreational marine industry is a key player in our region and in the province. We are working closely with them to help provide skilled employees and we are greatly encouraged by these generous donations," Tamblyn said.

Georgian College is in the midst of creating an innovative Skilled Trades Centre at the Midland Campus. The College's well-regarded Marine Small Engine Mechanical Techniques and Small Engine Mechanical Techniques programs will be moving to the new Centre of Excellence from current facilities at the Orillia Campus.

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