

Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology (MITT)

Industrial shop expansion biggest in decades for Manitoba college

Welding focus of new 7,500 square-foot addition

The Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology (MITT) is known for creating innovative programs driven by industry demand. However, in the case of the near 40-year-old institute's latest announcement, groundbreaking is more literal.

Earlier this year, MITT broke ground on a new 7,500 square foot addition to the south wing of its Henlow campus. This includes a 4,000 square-foot expansion of the existing welding shop, which will boast 36 new welding stations by the time it opens in fall 2022, with remaining space serving as flex-use for the neighbouring Millwright program.

It's the largest expansion by MITT in over 20 years and will serve both secondary and post-secondary programs, as well as industry.

The project was conceived in 2015 with design following soon after. After a few years of delays, final approval came in November 2020—not a moment too soon as demand for welders in Manitoba continues to grow.

"[Industry] demand for welders is exponential," says MITT Acting Vice President, Academic, Beverlie Stuart. "It is definitely one of the most in demand occupations in Manitoba".

The new space, however, is not just going to be running current programs—rather, the expanded area translates to expanded instructional opportunities for MITT.

"We don't want to duplicate the programs we already have. We don't want to saturate the market," says Frank Gallo, program manager of skilled trades at MITT. "The extra space is for other opportunities we're not running yet, such as specialty welding components that industry is requiring."

According to Jason Barley, MITT's chief projects officer, the final usage of the new space is still to be determined.

"Our academic team is still working to determine how to best utilize this space for the current and future needs of the institute ... deciding 'What is the best bang for our buck,'" he says. Some options include an innovation skills lab, a place to introduce emerging tech in manufacturing or welding, even a collision space to work with industry on advanced manufacturing projects, prototyping and troubleshooting. Barley says it can be "whatever we want" at this point.



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