



Sun Media

CHARGED: Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty, left, and Mayor Larry O'Brien appeared at yesterday's announcement at Algonquin College.

Province goes halvesies on expansion

The provincial government is picking up half of the tab for Algonquin College's planned expansion.

Premier Dalton McGuinty announced the province will give \$35 million to the college to build its Centre for Construction Trades and Building Sciences.

The total bill for the centre will top \$69 million, and college president Robert Gillett has been lobbying all levels of government for support. The city of Ottawa has donated a parcel of land near the Baseline transit station, and a pro-

posed \$5 million pedestrian footbridge will span Woodroffe Avenue, joining the new centre to the existing campus.

"Five years ago we were deciding whether to stay in the trades, and we had some very long and hard discussions about that, because we had facilities we felt didn't represent training we wanted to do for the future," said Gillett.

The centre will address what both Gillett and McGuinty have called a "critical shortage" in

skilled labourers.

"We have 100,000 jobs today that we can't fill," said McGuinty. "Many of those jobs require high levels of skills. And further to that, more than half of the people working in skilled trades are going to retire in the next 15 years."

McGuinty said the investment will build on the province's greatest strength, "the education and skills of our people."

"It's an important competitive edge worth honing, and worth owning," said McGuinty.