

## INDUSTRIAL AUTOMATION

### TECH JOBS WAITING FOR NIC AUTOMATION STUDENTS

Misko Valent has eight months left to go before he graduates from North Island College's Industrial Automation Technician program, but he's not worried about finding a job on graduation.

Just six weeks into the program he's already received one job offer from Alberta-based Sanjel Corporation, and he expects more to come.

"Getting a job offer six weeks into the program says a lot about the quality of NIC's program," said Valent. "Sanjel hired a graduate from last year's class and they're confident I'll have the skills they need."

Instructors Cory Batch and Brad Harsell aren't surprised. "There is an on-going skills shortage for technicians; we have several employers a year contact us looking for graduates," said Harsell.

As Vancouver Island's only Industrial Automation Technician diploma program, NIC draws students from across BC. Every year, more students arrive from the BC Mainland, choosing NIC for quality skills training, reputation, and competitive tuition.

"NIC students know they'll graduate with the skills and confidence to work anywhere," said Batch.

Students learn to build, program, and maintain automated systems in a variety of industries including oil and gas, and food and beverage manufacturing. They are also employed with the Canadian Forces, which pays student tuition and wages while they study.

Watch the video: [www.nic.bc.ca/trades](http://www.nic.bc.ca/trades)

## MARINE TRAINING

### MORE ACCESSIBLE MARINE TRAINING

Starting this fall, Campbell River residents can get Transport Canada Marine Safety approved education in their own town.

North Island College moved its marine training courses from the Comox Valley to create more opportunities for local students and employers.

"We've already had a huge amount of renewed interest from fishing resorts, tug boat companies, forestry, and fish farms," said Tracy Parker, who manages NIC's Industry Training programs. "Even though it is only 45 minutes closer, it's made training far more accessible for Alert Bay and other northern communities."

Courses starting in January include:

- **Restricted Operator, Maritime, (NAU-016)**
- **Small Vessel Operator Proficiency Training (NAU-005)**
- **Small Non-Pleasure Craft Marine Emergency Duties - 25 Miles (MED-003)**

Find out more: [www.nic.bc.ca/trades](http://www.nic.bc.ca/trades)

## PLUMBING & PIPING

# YOUNG, TRADES-FOCUSED AND READY TO LEARN



Hartley Matthews shapes a pipe in NIC's plumbing and piping workshop at the Comox Valley campus. Matthews is taking NIC's Plumbing and Piping Foundation program, en route to becoming a gas fitter, steam fitter or plumber.

### Seventeen-year-old North Island College student says skills training will take him far

Hartley Matthews has a better sense of his goals and learning style than many students twice his age.

At 17, the plumbing and piping foundation student has already built his own micro-house, travelled to South America and Turkey, and worked construction and roofing jobs.

After graduating from high school, he moved to the Comox Valley from Creston, BC to fulfill another goal: learn a trade to work anywhere and raise funds to keep travelling.

Though smart and goal-oriented, he knew early on he wasn't destined for university.

"I've always been better at trades and more practical skills than traditional academics," he said. "I'm so happy that going to trades

school is an acceptable option for students today. I would have hated being pushed into university. It's not how I learn and it's not what I'm good at."

He moved to the Comox Valley to stay with his uncle in the Comox Valley and earn plumbing credentials.

"I definitely caught the construction bug when I built my cabin in Creston, but when it came time to pick a program — I thought I'd try plumbing. It seems like the skills are in demand, and I can earn enough money to travel as much as possible. Once I get my Red Seal I can work all over the world."

WorkBC, the provincial employment services agency, estimates the average salary for plumbers ranges from \$44,000 to \$53,000 per year depending on experience, with the largest demand being in BC's North Coast / Nechako region.

North Island College offers four levels of Plumbing Apprenticeship Training as well as Plumbing and Piping Foundation, a 26-week

certificate program that allows students to gain technical training credit and 375 work-based hours toward the steamfitting, sprinkler fitting, plumbing, and gasfitting trades.

"I haven't decided which specialty I wanted to focus on yet," said Hartley. "Gas fitting and plumbing give me a few more options."

The programs offer a mix of hands-on training and classroom study. "There's pretty much a 50-50 balance of workshop and in class time," said instructor Rob Hughes.

Hartley is part of a demographic shift in plumbing training this year. His classroom includes Dual Credit high school students and a mix of older students retraining for a new career. "This year I would say the average age of students is about 23," Hughes adds.

NIC's next Plumbing & Piping Foundation program starts in February. Check the website for additional schedules and admission for the Apprenticeship Training program.

Find out more: [www.nic.bc.ca/trades](http://www.nic.bc.ca/trades)