



## Truck loggers donate \$15K to ADSS forestry

[Scott McKenzie](#) / Alberni Valley Times

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With local educational programs hitting the chopping block this month through the Alberni School District's budget process, one program is getting outside support from an industry that will depend on it.

On Tuesday, the Truck Loggers Association handed over a cheque for \$15,000 to the Alberni District Secondary School's forestry program to help ensure it sticks around.

"I'm happy to say TLA members are putting their money where their mouth is," said TLA executive director Dwight Yochim.

The TLA represents 425 independent forest contractors and their suppliers operating on the west coast of B.C. It represents 29 forestry companies in Port Alberni.

"It's only because of our members' tireless support of forestry education that the TLA is able to make this donation," said Yochim.

The donation comes shortly after the city-owned Alberni Valley Community Forest made a donation of \$50,000 to the forestry program. That money allowed the forestry program to add another class full of students, and this \$15,000 will allow ADSS to outfit the students.

"Each kid wears anywhere from \$700 to \$1,000 worth of gear," said ADSS forestry

teacher Ryan Dvorak. "Basically, we've scrounged what we could. We've used some money from our budget to purchase [gear], but with such an addition to the number of students, it will really go a long way in getting the proper tools in the hands of the kids."

The goal of the forestry program at ADSS is to ensure the next generation of forestry workers is being trained in the communities where they will be needed.

It also has a goal to become financially self-sufficient, however, that is a long way off, which is why donations such as the one from the TLA are vital to its survival in what is a tough time for local school districts financially.

"Donations like this allow me to make it less of a classroom-based program and more of a real world based program," Dvorak said.

According to a TLA study, the forestry industry will need 6,500 people by 2022.

"These kids are the future of our industry," said TLA president Don Banasky.

"They are our truck drivers, machine operators, business owners and leaders. This donation is an investment not only in their future, but ours."

The ADSS forestry program is for Grade 11 and 12 high school students.

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