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Niagara College President Dan Patterson activates the laser to cut the ribbon at the new Photonics Engineering Technology lab Tuesday at the Welland Campus./STAFF PHOTO J.T. LEWIS

## Niagara College zaps ribbon to open photonic lab

TRIBUNE STAFF  
WELLAND

Niagara College provided a glance at the future Tuesday with the official launching of Ontario's first undergraduate programs in the emerging field of photonics – the generation, transmission and utilization of light information and energy.

"The launching of the photonics program places Niagara among higher institutions in Ontario as leading edge in technology," said Niagara College president Dan Patterson, who used a laser to cut the ribbon to open the labs.

"We're really excited about that because at the end of the day what is most important is that we provide the best opportunities for our students and for our industry. Photonics is the next multi-trillion dollar industry."

The two- and three-year diploma programs were developed through a partnership with Photonics Research Ontario and Algonquin College to train technicians and technologists for employment in the photonics sector.

"The photonics project is an important part of Niagara College's strategy to assist the development of our region's economy and generate new career opportunities for our graduates, both in advanced manufacturing that uses photonics as an enabling technology and in the photonics industry



First year Photonics Engineering Technology student Steve Suggett of Port Dover gets a lesson in adjusting a laser scanner in the new photonics lab at Niagara College Welland Campus from Mark Csele Professor of Photonics Engineering. /STAFF PHOTO J.T. LEWIS

response to this initiative from industry and, more importantly, from the students," said Dr. Gerard F. Lynch, president and CEO of Photonics Research Ontario.

"The first graduates of this program will build a solid foundation that has the capacity to launch Ontario as a global hub in photonics, but to do so

ment, space renovation and the acquisition of more that \$1.7 million of laser and related photonics equipment, including laser welders, advanced optics equipment, fibre optics equipment and advanced electronic equipment at both Niagara and Algonquin Colleges.

Jay Yatulis the program co-ordinator