

# Big winners for small engines

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They were all winners.

Since only three students participated in the annual competition, they're assured of earning a gold, silver or bronze medal that will be awarded as a result of the small engine repair competition held last Wednesday at Port Colborne High School.

It was part of the Ontario Skills Competition which pits the talent of high school students against one another in areas ranging from auto mechanics to carpentry.

"I wish we had this when we were in school," said West Park shop teacher Eric Rioux, who was there supporting his student Patrick Moldowan.

Gary Young, the head of Eastdale Secondary School's shop department, said the Ontario Skills Competition is a great way to promote the skilled trades among young people, as well as recognize the students who excel at it.

"It's good for the kids and that's mainly what we're after," Young said. "The kids get to come out and see how much they learned."

Although they were expecting a larger group of competitors, Port High shop teacher Mike Pastore said a few students had to cancel due to illness or conflicting plans.

The competition had a series of six work stations set up to challenge the student's skills and knowledge.

"There's a work order at each sta-

tion and the students have to read it and do a job," Pastore said.

For instance at one station they were required to diagnose a problem and fix it, and then start the engine to make sure it runs. At another station, they were required to change the rings on an engine. It's the same kind of work they might do if they were working at a repair shop, like Bud's Small Engine Repair - several staff members from the local business were on hand to judge the work of the students.

It was the second year Port High student Curtis Dilts was at the competition. Last year, he was a few microns off in one of his measurements and he had to settle for second place. This year, he was confident he had that problem licked.

While small engine repair is a challenge for some, Dilts considers it entertainment.

"Mostly, I'm doing this for fun," he said as he installed a new set of rings in a piston.

A day later, the Ontario Skills Competition continued with an automotive repair challenge at West Park. With more than 20 students competing from high schools throughout Niagara, it was expected to be significantly bigger than the small engine repair competition. Although all three students who participated in the competition Wednesday earned themselves a medal, the colour of that medal won't be announced until the awards banquet is held in April.

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## SMALL ENGINE COMPETITION AT PORT HIGH



Clockwise from above left, Port High student Curtis Dilts installs new rings in an engine during the small engine repair competition last week. Westpark Student Patrick Moldowan wears a look of satisfaction as the engine he was working on roars to life. Eastdale Secondary School student James Robin was one of three students at a small engine repair competition last week.

INPORT PHOTOS ALLAN BENNER