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## Polytech and college students to race their bikes

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Thursday, October 11, 2012 7:17

Students from the Eastern Institute of Technology and Wairoa College are set to descend on Manfeild Raceway for next week's National Secondary Schools Minibike Grand Prix 2012.

They will be joined by more than 250 minibikes and sidecars from 25 schools for two days of racing.

The event is the culmination of students' technology and engineering project work, where the bikes students have built will be raced. The project aligns with the new Manufacturing and Technology vocational pathways - an NCEA initiative.

Engineering and Technology tutor at the Eastern Institute of Technology, Shane Cameron, said building the minibike was a challenge - involving adding the engine, suspension, steering and body-kit using MIG welding, lathe turning and drill press processes.

"The students come from the east coast schools, as far up as Hicks Bay, which is a six-hour round trip for them," he said. "They come to EIT Tairāwhiti campus in Gisborne because we run the Trades Academy programme here for the high schools. The Grand Prix is a celebration of all their hard work."

The young engineers are aided by learning resources from Competenz, the industry training organisation for the engineering industry.

"The minibike project gives the students practical hands-on skills like welding, which can help them progress into a trade when they leave school," Competenz Trades general manager Fiona Kingsford said.

"They actually gain unit standards towards the National Certificate in Mechanical Engineering Technology Level 2."

The Minibike Grand Prix was founded by Feilding High School in 1997. This year's race is set to be the biggest yet. The highest overall points winner for each race class (five altogether), will take away a cup or shield, while the winner of the finals receives a series of prizes from sponsors. The event costs over \$12,500 and would be hard to put on without support from Tools4Work and sponsoring businesses.



Whakamiharo Falwasser-Ruben (left), Whakapono Taukamo, Christian Aupouri and David Manual, EIT students.

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