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Hernando Green, a Beacon College graduate, uses the computer in Beacon College's Apple Macintosh computer lab on Monday. The college recently received a \$15,000 grant to pay for the \$50,000 computer lab.

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## Computer Lab Offers More Opportunities for Beacon

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Staff Writer

LEESBURG -- The computer lab at Beacon College is giving students a reason to learn.

Since the college bought more than \$50,000 worth of computers, printers and scanners, the students can't stay out of the lab, said Sandy Novak, associate professor in charge of the Computer Information Systems Program.

With the computer lab, this year the college was able to offer courses in computer graphics, digital photography, digital imaging with Photoshop, web page design and Web animation. The program offers two tracks for students: Information systems and Web and digital media.

"Many (students) have never been exposed to the Apple," Novak said. "Its computer friendly design has really allowed them to blossom in their graphic assignments."

Novak said for class assignments students will develop their own cereal box, beverage containers and billboards with slogans and mascots to target various audiences. The students' projects are on display throughout the school.

"They're really achieving beautiful stuff," she said. "The whole school gets excited when they see student work put up."

A \$15,000 grant from the James T. Lee Foundation will help pay for some of the lab upgrades. The school is expecting to upgrade the software in the lab for the students next semester.

But not every student is destined to become a Web designer or a graphic designer for an advertising firm or media company. Learning some of the graphic design principles and computer functions can open doors for students going into other careers.

Hernando Green graduated from Beacon with a bachelors degree in Human Services and a minor in psychology. Before Beacon, Green was only familiar with computers that ran on Windows.

"It's just a nice looking computer," Green said. "I wish I could take it with me."

Green plans to attend Webster University in St. Louis and earn a masters of business and administration.

Mandy Schlein graduated from Beacon with a liberal arts degree and a minor in history. She plans to attend the University of Florida to earn a museum studies master.

"I really like the Macs," she said. "I was really excited when they put them in."

Beacon also provides college opportunities for students with learning disabilities. More than half of the students come from out-of-state for the college's specialized services.