



**HANDS ON:** Driving instructor Colin Manion (right) congratulates student Raymond Hughes on becoming the 100th Community Driver Learner Programme graduate and gaining his restricted licence.

# Driver programme clocks up No 100

TE KUITI'S 100th Community Driver Learner Programme graduate says his achievement has given him "freedom".

Nineteen-year-old Raymond Hughes isn't alone in gaining his restricted driver's licence numerous other Waitomo district young people have also been successful since the programme began in 2013.

He gained his restricted driver's licence this month after 10 weeks of lessons.

He says: "It'll help me find the right path and

the right career.

"We've all gained experience and confidence on the roads and it has opened a new door of opportunities for all of us."

His long-term goal is to become a truck driver, he is currently studying a sports course at Te Wanganui O Aotearoa in Te Kuiti.

Run through the Waitomo District Council (WDC) and driven by Te Kuiti Community House Trust co-ordinator Desiree McKenzie, the programme is funded by the New Zealand Transport Agency and AA.

Ms McKenzie says the local programme is a "great success".

"The driving programme creates safer journeys for our youth on country roads as a result of the knowledge gained from the professional driving instructors."

A 10-week block course provides young drivers with 20 free lessons with help from driving instructors Des Holden and Colin Manion.

Six other communities – Porirua, Gisborne, Christchurch, East, South Auckland and Whangarei – have also benefited from the initiative.

Nationwide, 202 young drivers have achieved their restricted licences and the Te Kuiti programme graduates echo one another saying their success has given them independence and freedom.

For Te Kuiti High School student Julia Armstrong (16) getting her restricted has allowed her to drive her mum's car to school.

"It felt good getting my licence. The course has taught me to be more confident on the road now that I know the road rules."

NZTA statistics show young people are over represented in crash rates in New Zealand.

Improving their safety was one of the key priorities in the Government's Safer Journeys road safety strategy (2010-2020).

The driving programme was developed to provide a way communities could work together to achieve safety.

The programme's funding has been extended until June 2016.

NZTA will work on ways the WDC can take ownership of the programme and run it independently.

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World Whisky Day, Saturday, May 16th.

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## POLICE DESK

### May 2

A POLICE pursuit through Te Kuiti ended in a local man being stopped on Mahoe Cres and found in possession of methamphetamine (P). He will appear in court on June 11.

AN Otorohanga man was arrested after his fingerprints were found at a burgled home. When questioned he admitted the crime and was charged with burglary. The following day he was arrested for breaching bail conditions and appeared in Hamilton District Court on May 4. He appeared in the Te Kuiti District Court on May 7.

### May 3

BURGLAR(S) gained entry to a Rangitahi St home in Otorohanga and stole several pairs of socks before dumping them on the back lawn. The same house was broken into through an unlocked door on April 30 and \$62 taken from a bedroom. Police have a suspect in mind.

A TE KUITI woman was arrested and will appear in court on June 11 after being involved in a fight on Taupiri St.



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