



# News Release

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## **NMCC hosts local SkillsUSA competition for area high school students**

**Aroostook County** - Students enrolled in the electronics/computer servicing program at the Caribou Regional Technology Center recently tested their knowledge in a skills competition hosted by Northern Maine Community College. For the fifth consecutive year, Joseph McLaughlin, NMCC computer electronics instructor, and senior students in his program both set up and judged the regional contest which serves as a preliminary for the state SkillsUSA competition.

The event is a contest in computer maintenance technology. It consists of a written exam, which accounts for 15 percent of the total possible score. This is followed by a hands-on activity designed to measure the students' mastery of several fundamental computer repair tasks. The latter exercise is performed on individual computers that have been setup with a specific problem by NMCC students.

Each of the four participating students was assigned a single computer to troubleshoot and tasked with determining the problem and documenting the steps necessary to repair the unit. They were scored on safety, troubleshooting skills, and their documentation of the process used. Scores were combined with the test scores to determine a rank order of the contestants.

Coming in first place was Noah Tounzen of Limestone, with Matthew Donnelly of Washburn placing second. Also taking part in the competition was Alex Fantasia of Washburn and Joshua Kelly of Limestone.

“SkillsUSA provides students with the opportunity to develop and enhance their technical and workplace skills. This competition is an opportunity for my students to meet and interact with students who are further along in their technical education,” said Lisa Anderson, computer servicing instructor at the Caribou Regional Technology Center. “Holding our local SkillsUSA competition at NMCC exposes my students to new possibilities for the future. This experience provides a glimpse of what it is like to attend college and of challenges that they may face at NMCC. They also have the opportunity to network with people who may be their future coworkers or employers.”

Doug Ewing, Peter Deschaine, and Scott A. Rossignol, who each participated in last year's competition, are currently enrolled in NMCC's computer electronics program. Two of the students participating in this year's competition, Noah Tounzen and Matthew Donnelly, have already applied for the fall semester.

"This allows the high school students to visit the computer electronics lab and see what we do and the equipment we have. This is a great partnership that benefits both the regional technology center and the College," said McLaughlin. "My students benefit as well. Not only does their role in this competition give them a chance to experience a teaching moment, but it allows them to put a lot of the safety skills and troubleshooting methods which they've learned in class to use as they judge the work of these high school students."

Work on the competition begins far in advance of the actual event. McLaughlin provides a study guide for the students to access and practice a month before the students visit NMCC.

After the competition, McLaughlin spends time explaining what was wrong with each of the computers and giving the students some overall troubleshooting tips.

"I am so pleased that we partner with NMCC for our local SkillsUSA Competition," said Anderson. "This is an extension of the strong partnership that already exists between our programs and our schools. We have an existing articulation agreement between our two programs and are in the process of establishing a dual credit agreement so whereby students may earn credit at NMCC while enrolled in my class."

McLaughlin serves on Anderson's advisory committee and provides technical and educational support when needed.

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*Students and faculty at Northern Maine Community College and the Caribou Regional Technology Center came together at NMCC recently for the SkillsUSA competition. Participating were (front row, left to right) CRTC Computer Servicing Instructor Lisa Anderson and her students Alex Fantasia of Washburn, Matthew Donnelly of Washburn, Noah Tounzen of Limestone, and Joshua Kelly of Limestone, along with NMCC instructor Joseph McLaughlin. In the back are NMCC students (left to right) Ken Prescott of Presque Isle, Joe Gilley of West Enfield, Dan Butts of Mapleton, Dan MacFarline of Presque Isle, Brian Kingsbury of Houlton, Jeff Thuo of Randolph, MA and Brandan Pinchott of Presque Isle.*