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Presidents of UMPI and NMCC to speak at New England Sustainability Summit

Presque Isle -- The pioneering work of Northern Maine Community College and the University of Maine at Presque Isle in the area of wind power will be showcased at an upcoming New England conference that will bring together the region's senior leaders of higher education, business and government.

UMPI President Donald Zillman and NMCC President Timothy Crowley have both been invited to serve as speakers at A Climate Change on Campus: New England Sustainability Summit 2010, hosted by the New England Board of Higher Education. The event will be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Worcester, Massachusetts on April 23.

"I believe that our invitation to participate as panelists speaks volumes about the leading roles that our respective campuses have assumed in the areas of wind power curriculum development and the harnessing of wind to generate power. Moreover, it is fitting that both institutions were asked to share our experiences as a great deal of collaboration has existed and continues between our two campuses in this area," said Crowley.

In 2009, NMCC became the first college in New England to offer an associate degree program in wind power technology. Last May, UMPI became the first campus in the state to install a mid-size wind turbine.

"We are so pleased to be showcasing to all of New England the work that higher education institutions in northern Maine are doing on the sustainability front," said Zillman. "UMPI has been able to partner with NMCC many times over the years and the ways we've been able to work together on our wind projects have been especially exciting. We are delighted to share this work with others and to see Aroostook County represented as a leading player in sustainability efforts."

At the sustainability summit, Zillman will participate in a president's roundtable discussion on climate action planning, with discussion centered on higher education institutions that have signed on to the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment. UMPI joined the effort to move campuses across the United States toward carbon neutrality in February of 2007.

The ACUPCC, which now includes 680 colleges and universities across the country, has called on higher education to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions from electricity, heating, commuting and air travel. Zillman's session will focus on lessons learned from signatory institutions.

Crowley will participate in a discussion entitled "Growing the Green Workforce: The Community College Connection," and will speak about the high level of interest in the wind power technology program at NMCC by prospective students as well as within the wind power industry. Today, the college has 36 students enrolled in the program and over fifty qualified applicants for 18 available slots next fall.

The workforce session will focus on the new green economy and how the new so-called emerging "green-collar" jobs will impact the existing labor force. The panel will also discuss the prospect touted by President Barack Obama and others that green jobs will serve as an economic salvation.

Zillman and Crowley are among a select group of about 30 individuals who will speak at the New England Sustainability Summit.

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