



News Release

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Governor Baldacci to speak at 47th NMCC Commencement May 15

Aroostook County - Maine Governor John Elias Baldacci will address the 47th graduating class of Northern Maine Community College during commencement exercises on Saturday, May 15, and at the same time mark one of the major milestones of his administration. Baldacci, who is serving his second four-year term as governor, will speak before the 230 graduates, their guests, and NMCC faculty and staff at 10:00 a.m. in the College gymnasium.

The visit to the Presque Isle campus will be especially significant, as the governor celebrates the seventh anniversary of his signing of the legislation that created the Maine Community College System. The bill, which the governor himself proposed in the spring of 2003, was passed by the 121st Maine Legislature on March 27 of that year and signed into law three days later.

The visit will also be significant for NMCC, which boasts itself as the first community college in Maine. In a spirit of friendly competition amongst its sister colleges in the seven campus system, NMCC officials went to the summit of Mars Hill Mountain on July 1, 2003, to catch the first rays of the day's sun on the first official day of Maine's Community Colleges.

"We are so pleased that Governor Baldacci will join us and deliver the commencement address," said NMCC President Timothy Crowley. "His vision and support for the creation of the Maine Community College System and the resulting impact in our region and the entire state have forever changed the higher education landscape in Maine. A comprehensive community college system was established in large part to provide greater access to affordable, quality higher education in Maine. The results over the past seven years are impressive."

Born and raised in Bangor, Baldacci was first elected to public office in 1978, earning a seat on the Bangor City Council at the age of 23. In 1982, he was elected to the Maine State Senate, where he served for twelve years.

He was elected to the United States House of Representatives in 1994. He was re-elected to Congress by wide margins in 1996, 1998, and 2000.

Baldacci was first elected Governor of the State of Maine in 2002. Aside from the Maine Community College System, he won approval for major initiatives in his first term which included Dirigo Health and Pine Tree Zones.

In his second term, Baldacci is building on the foundation he created in his first four years in office. He is working to increase Maine's competitiveness in the global economy; streamline government services; attract good paying jobs; and ensure all Mainers have access to quality education, workforce training, and health care.

His work toward making Maine energy independent and a leader in the development of green energy resources, particularly wind power, provided an opportunity for Maine's northernmost community college to establish the only wind power technology program in New England. Established in 2008, the wind power technology program at NMCC is currently preparing the technicians needed to support the growth of the commercial, residential and community wind industry in Maine.

A report released by the Governor's Task Force on Wind Power Development in February 2008 recommended that Maine host 2 GW (gigawatts) of wind power by 2015 and 3 GW by 2020. In order to host 2 GW of power in 2015, modeling from the U.S. Department of Energy's Job and Economic Development Impact (JEDI) model indicates that at least 180 field technicians, administrators and managers will be needed. Today, the college has thirty-six students enrolled in the program and over fifty qualified applicants for the eighteen available slots next fall.

Also speaking during the commencement ceremony will be Robert Gagnon of Madawaska, a non-traditional graduating senior in the college's plumbing and heating program. Gagnon, who has been named NMCC's 2010 'student of the year,' was a displaced Fraser Paper worker who accepted a buyout offer from the mill when it downsized in the summer of 2007.

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Governor John Elias Baldacci