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## News Release

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### **Houlton Higher Education Center and NMCC to host “Intro to College” day November 12**

*Aroostook County* - Next year will mark a decade since the Houlton Higher Education Center first opened its doors on Military Street in Houlton, ushering in a new era in access and opportunity for education in the region. Although thousands of students have since taken advantage of the various programs offered at the center, officials feel it's time to remind community members about what's available, and introduce them to some new programs that have been introduced in recent years.

To educate a new generation of southern Aroostook residents and remind others about the educational opportunities available to them, the Houlton Higher Education Center and Northern Maine Community College will co-sponsor a community “Intro to College” day at the center. The event, on Friday, November 12, between 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m., is open to all community members.

“Intro to College is intended help the community feel more connected to the opportunities available at the Houlton Higher Education Center. You are never too young, or too old, to think about and begin planning for more education.” said Otis Smith, director of adult education and College Transitions, as well as the NMCC off campus center director at the Houlton Higher Education Center.

Organizers are extending a special invitation to all area high school students, their parents and adults in the area who are considering college. The message they hope to convey: whether you are looking to get started on your pursuit of higher education or wanting to complete it right here in southern Aroostook, the options available have not been this many and varied in over three decades.

It's at that time, in the late 1970's, that Houlton's Ricker College shut its doors. The vision for the Houlton Higher Education Center first came about in 1999 as the result of a grassroots community effort to re-establish a formal home for higher education in the southern Aroostook town.

Although both NMCC and the University of Maine at Presque Isle had a presence in the community, Houlton was looking to fill a larger void left after Ricker closed in 1979. The community group worked collaboratively with the University of Maine System, the then Maine Technical College System, and other educational entities to bring the center to fruition.

The “Intro to College” day will provide attendees with a comprehensive understanding of the opportunities available at the Houlton Higher Education Center. High school students will learn how they can take advantage of programs that allow them to take college classes while still in high school, often at no or little cost.

In addition, center staff and others joining in the afternoon from NMCC will be on hand to discuss with community members how to know if they are academically prepared for college and what programs exist locally to help them become better prepared. Other information will be available on the financial aid process, including grants and loans, as well as the admissions process. Attendees will have the opportunity to also see what classes will be offered both at the center and on NMCC’s main campus in Presque Isle beginning in January, as well as a peek at courses likely to be offered next fall.

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