



News Release

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NMCC partners with County surveying firm to expose students to tools of their trade

Aroostook County – A partnership between Northern Maine Community College and one local business is providing students exposure to the technology used within their future profession. With the support of Blackstone Land Surveying in Caribou, computer aided drafting students at NMCC are gaining firsthand knowledge of newer technology utilized by fellow land surveyors in the community.

The collaborative effort, initiated between local business owner Dale Blackstone and part time NMCC instructor Roger Crouse, is allowing students to gain knowledge about equipment that incorporates what they learn in the classroom with new technology. Eight students have been working in the field with Blackstone and his colleague, fellow licensed land surveyor Brad Fox. The two demonstrated the importance and uses for two tools used to perform land surveys.

“We use this equipment daily to do our jobs, so coming out here and working with NMCC allows us the opportunity to show students how everything works,” Blackstone said.

The first piece of equipment introduced by Blackstone was a Total Station, which uses a telescope to collect land data such as distances and various locations. That data is then able to be stored digitally and later transferred to a computer. Once downloaded into a computer, software within the Total Station can be used to create a physical drawing of the location being surveyed.

Blackstone also showed students how they could use a Global Positioning System (GPS) which allows users to attain the exact latitudinal and longitudinal coordinates of the land itself. This helps gain understanding of where the land is geographically prior to actually drawing it out.

According to Crouse, these outside education sessions are an affordable way students can keep abreast of the happenings within their field of study. “These hands on study sessions are the next best thing to having this equipment available in the classroom. They serve a great benefit to these students because this is the equipment they will be using when they graduate. Four hour field sessions like this are the most cost efficient way for students to gain both technical knowledge and hands-on training. It allows them the chance to have access to a wealth of information from a technological and hands-on stand point,” said Crouse.

The equipment demonstrated by Blackstone and his team can range in price from \$40,000-\$55,000 dollars and, in these challenging economic times, purchasing technology like this to have within the classroom is cost prohibitive.

Offering this education to the students not only helps them stay current with what's going on within the workforce, it also helps Blackstone in his profession as well.

“Part of our licensure stems from us working within education, and as a part of continuing education we are able offer this hands on instruction to students. We are able to earn the credits we need to stay licensed, but more important than that, we are able to help these students looking to pursue surveying as a career,” said Blackstone.

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Surveyor Dale Blackstone (right) demonstrates land surveying technology to NMCC students. Working with Blackstone are (left to right) part-time NMCC instructor Roger Crouse and students Mariah LeMieux-Lupien of Presque Isle and Robert Ewing of Washburn.