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News Release

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NMCC prepares to celebrate 50th Anniversary beginning in 2011

Aroostook County - On June 17, 1961, Maine Governor John H. Reed, an Aroostook County native from Fort Fairfield, signed a bill into law that established an institute in the deactivated buildings of the missile base in Presque Isle. Fifty years later, Northern Maine Community College is a thriving campus with record enrollment serving the region's higher education and training needs.

The coming New Year marks the beginning of a series of important milestones for NMCC that extend through 2015. The golden anniversary of the College will be celebrated both on campus and in the Aroostook County community throughout that time.

Festivities will begin in the moments that lead into the heralding of 2011 in the heart of downtown Presque Isle when the Star City Star, built two years ago by NMCC welding and metal fabrication students and instructor Dennis Albert, is raised near the intersection of Main and State Streets as midnight approaches. The Star Rising has fast become a tradition in central Aroostook that is looked forward to by area residents as a localized and unique claim to fame not unlike the ball drop in New York's Times Square.

Activity on campus will begin shortly into the New Year with the start of the new semester, when the community is invited to join students, faculty, staff and alumni of NMCC, and its forerunners Northern Maine Vocational Technical Institute and Northern Maine Technical College, for flashback to the early 1960's. A sock-hop, complete with music and entertainment from the era, a noon time malt shop themed meal, and indoor drive-in theatre will be held in the NMCC Gymnasium on Wednesday, January 12, between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

"We wanted to kick-off our celebration with a fun event that our students, employees and community members could all take part in and enjoy," said Jason Parent, NMCC director of development and college relations and a member of the NMCC 50th anniversary celebration planning committee. "The idea of a sock-hop was developed as a way to celebrate the popular culture at the time of the late 1950's and early 1960's as the College came to be."

According to Parent the official kick-off event is the first of many that will take place in the coming year marking the founding of NMCC, and coming four years as the College and community look ahead to 2013, the 50th anniversary year of the first entering class and 2015, five decades following the first graduation at NMVTI.

In the more immediate future, additional activities are planned for later in 2011, including a luncheon set to mark the anniversary date of the signing of the legislation that created NMCC on June 17. Invited guests will include all current and former County legislators, and College officials hope to invite former Governor Reed to attend the event.

Major events will be held on the weekend of September 9, 10 and 11 when the NMCC Alumni and Friends Organization hosts its second annual Homecoming weekend. A gala 50th anniversary banquet is planned for that time. That activity will include the honoring of NMCC's 50 Stars, individuals from each of the graduating classes at NMCC over the past five decades who represent the vast array of careers that the College has prepared individuals for through that time, and who by virtue of their profession and service to their communities throughout the region, state and other parts of the country, embody the legacy of the institution.

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