



News Release

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NMCC Wind Power Technology program receives \$50,000 from Silicon Valley Community Foundation to purchase needed equipment

Aroostook County - The Wind Power Technology program at Northern Maine Community College has received an early Christmas gift in the form of a \$50,000 contribution from the Troutbeck Fund, an advised fund of the Silicon Valley Community Foundation. The gift is designated toward the purchase of needed instructional equipment for the only academic program of its kind in New England.

The Troutbeck Fund was established by Mary Smith of California, a native of Presque Isle, as an advised fund in memory of her husband, Rodney Smith, and her parents, Hope and Robert Akeley, both of whom were born and raised in central Aroostook County.

“We are profoundly grateful to Mrs. Smith for her advocacy on our behalf and for her support in the form of this contribution through the Troutbeck Fund,” said NMCC President Timothy Crowley. “The growth of northern Maine is tied directly to our ability to develop the knowledge and skills needed within our workforce to utilize our abundant natural resources to create alternative energy sources for our state. This support will enable the College to purchase needed equipment to train future wind industry technicians.”

Specifically, the contribution will allow for the purchase of a mechanical drive system trainer that will be utilized by students to learn the fundamentals of mechanical transmission systems used in wind power and other industrial settings. Last summer, the College purchased a single unit to be utilized by the 36 second year and 18 first year students enrolled in the wind power technology program. The units cost \$43,000 each.

According to NMCC wind power technology instructor Wayne Kilcollins, having a second trainer will be most beneficial to the students in that it will provide for more individual hands-on learning opportunities and make for a more efficient use of lab time.

“The addition of this equipment will reduce the amount of time it will take students to become acquainted with the mechanical systems they will be exposed to in wind turbine operations from sixteen weeks to twelve weeks,” said Kilcollins. “This is a key piece of instructional equipment for our program. Utilizing the trainer, students learn industry-relevant skills including how to operate, install, analyze performance and design basic mechanical transmission systems.”

In addition to the mechanical drive system trainer, the College intends to use the remaining \$7,000 balance from the Troutbeck Fund contribution toward the purchase of a multimedia interactive programmable controller unit. This equipment will allow students to program a controller and connect different motors, switches and other devices to see how the program they created interacts with these components.

The \$50,000 gift was received by the NMCC Foundation, which exists to support the College in meeting its commitment to provide superior educational opportunities for all segments of the community. According to Brian Hamel, current NMCC Foundation Board chair, this latest gift to the organization is further evidence of the high level of support for the work of the College throughout the Aroostook County community and beyond.

“We are very fortunate to have such a high level of support come from throughout the region, but to have a gift of this size come from across the country in Silicon Valley is affirmation of the high quality education NMCC delivers and the critically important role the College plays in meeting the education, training and economic development needs of our state,” said Hamel.

The Foundation leader credits the outstanding work of the faculty and staff at NMCC and the community awareness efforts undertaken by the College, as well as the work of the entire Foundation board, which all contributed to the College realizing the gift. Hamel noted the efforts of his predecessor, immediate past NMCC Foundation Board chair, Richard Engels as especially significant.

“This is certainly a wonderful early Christmas gift,” said Hamel. “NMCC students will be the direct beneficiaries of Mrs. Smith generosity. We are most appreciative of her support of, and interest in, the College.”

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The \$50,000 contribution to Northern Maine Community College from the Troutbeck Fund, an advised fund of the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, will be used to purchase a second mechanical drive system trainer for the wind power technology program. A similar unit, purchased by the College last summer, is in high demand as evidenced from this photo taken in the NMCC wind power technology lab this semester.