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News Release

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NMCC turns dial back to early 1960's to kick-off 50th Anniversary

Aroostook County - Hoola hoops and poodle skirts, the “Hand Jive” and “Mashed Potato,” diner fare and malted milk shakes were the sights, sounds and tastes of the early 1960's, but on January 12, they'll make a comeback at Northern Maine Community College as the campus officially kicks-off its 50th Anniversary by going retro.

The community is invited to join the students, faculty and staff at NMCC for a 60's “sock hop”celebration complete with a D.J. spinning Rock ‘n Roll hits from the era and the NMCC Diner serving up free burger and hot dog baskets with a soda fountain counter featuring milk shakes and ice cream sundaes. Festivities will kick-off at 11:00 a.m. on Wednesday, January 12, in the College Gymnasium and run through the noon hour, concluding in the early afternoon.

“We wanted to bring people back to the period in time when NMCC first came to be,” said Betsy Harris, NMCC registrar and chair of the subcommittee organizing the unique birthday party. “It is a celebration that faculty, staff and students are really looking forward to. Some plan to dress for the era, including different themes for different offices and departments. We have groups planning special live performances of popular songs of the era and others who will compete in a number of fun contests all set to go with our theme of a 60's celebration.”

Harris and the committee of NMCC students, employees and community members who have been planning the event for the past several weeks are looking forward to competitions to see who can dance the best twist or who can master the hoola hoop. The event will also feature Karaoke with songs from early 1960's and a simulated indoor drive-in theatre all in the College gymnasium.

The inspiration for the fun anniversary celebration kick-off event came from early College yearbooks that showed students participating in a “sock hop” on campus in the 1960's. Building the opening activity around the popular culture of time was determined to be the best way to get the campus and community into the celebratory spirit.

Event planners wanted to kick-off the first 50th anniversary event as students returned from the holiday break to set the tone for the coming months. The new semester at NMCC begins on Monday, January 10.

The College was founded on June 17, 1961, when 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. 2011 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.

According to NMCC Director of Development and College Relations Jason 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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Northern Maine Community College has added an insignia to its logo to mark its 50th anniversary and the coming five years of milestones the institution will reach that recognize the College's five decades "Serving the County." The celebration will kick off with a 1960's era sock hop in the NMCC Gymnasium Wednesday, January 12.