



January 10, 2011

NR11002

News Release

Contact:
Jason Parent
Development and
College Relations Office
33 Edgemont Drive
Presque Isle, ME 04769
Phone: (207) 768-2808
Fax: (207) 760-1101
jparent@nmcc.edu

NMCC Precision Metals Manufacturing Program gains new \$110,000 state of the art equipment through partnership with international machine tool builder

Aroostook County - Northern Maine Community College students and the growing metals manufacturing industry sector in the region and statewide will be the direct beneficiaries of a partnership between the campus and a the largest computer numerical controlled machine tool builder in the Western World.

A new state-of-the-art automation lathe, with an estimated value of \$110,000, is in place in the precision metals manufacturing lab at NMCC as the result of a newly signed school entrustment agreement with Hass Automation, Inc. The partnership is facilitated and supported by Haas designated reseller Windsor, Connecticut-based Trident Machine Tools, LLC.

The impressive high-tech unit, which stands seven feet tall and occupies approximately 105 square feet of space, will be immediately put to use by students in the program who are returning from holiday break for the spring semester. According to Dean Duplessis, NMCC precision metals manufacturing instructor, the newly entrusted equipment boasts significant hardware and software upgrades, including increased tool and part capacity, which will provide students with a much broader spectrum of “real-world” project experience in the lab. The new software incorporated into the lathe provides new and enhanced functions to facilitate set-up and component manufacturing.

The precision metals manufacturing program was first introduced at NMCC in 2002, through an initial investment of federal funds championed by U.S. Senator Susan Collins to positively impact the emerging industry in the region and state. In 2003, the facility that houses the program was designated as the first Hass Technical Education Center in Maine and endorsed by both Hass and Trident Machine as a program that would re-invigorate precision manufacturing in the northern part of the state and draw students to a career field with a marked shortage of skilled workers.

The College and Hass entered into an entrustment agreement at that time and Hass equipment, valued at hundreds of thousands of dollars, was placed in the precision metals manufacturing lab. Access to the technology and the depth and breadth of hands-on experience it provided students, along with the strength of the curriculum, led to official designation by the National Institute for Machining Skills (NIMS) as an accredited training program in level I and level II machining skills.

“Our key to success has been our ability, through the entrustment, to expose students to a wider variety of technology,” said Dean Duplessis, NMCC precision metals manufacturing instructor. “The new lathe provided through this latest entrustment agreement will allow students to train on the newest technology, making them that much more marketable and attractive to prospective employers.”

There is great industry demand in the region for students completing NMCC’s precision metals manufacturing program. According to Duplessis, graduates are heavily recruited each year by several local and statewide firms, as well as companies located in New Brunswick.

NMCC President Timothy Crowley has visited a number of the businesses that are hiring program graduates, including the Smith and Wesson plant in Houlton that has several College alumni placed in key positions. The prospect for newly trained technicians in precision metals manufacturing program in the coming years is high as NMCC is realizing record enrollment this academic year with two-dozen students.

“The metals manufacturing industry in this region is seeing growth at a time when the economy is struggling. Much of that growth has to do with having a qualified workforce available. That workforce in northern Maine is being exposed to the technology that will drive this industry forward here on our campus,” said Crowley. “This latest entrustment agreement is further evidence of the positive impact NMCC has on this industry. It is validation of the work we are doing. The value of this entrustment to the college is significant.”

#####



Dean Duplessis (far right), lead instructor of Northern Maine Community College’s precision metals manufacturing program, looks on as a new state-of-the-art Haas automation lathe was delivered and installed in the college’s CNC lab recently. The \$110,000 piece of equipment was provided as the result of a school entrustment agreement with Haas Automation, Inc.