



**January 21, 2011**

NR11009

# News Release

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## **NMCC hosts local SkillsUSA competition for area high school students**

**Aroostook County** - Students enrolled in the electronics/computer servicing program at the Caribou Regional Applied Technology Center recently tested their knowledge in a skills competition hosted by Northern Maine Community College. Joseph McLaughlin, NMCC computer electronics instructor, and senior students in his program both set up and judged the regional contest which serves as a preliminary for the state SkillsUSA competition.

The event is a contest in computer maintenance technology. It consists of a written exam, which is similar to the industry standard A+ certification exam and accounts for 15 percent of the total possible score. This is followed by a hands-on activity designed to measure the students' mastery of several fundamental computer repair tasks. The latter exercise is performed on individual computers that have been setup with a specific problem by NMCC students.

Each of the five participating students was assigned a computer to troubleshoot and tasked with determining the problem and documenting the steps necessary to repair the unit. They students were scored on safety, troubleshooting skills, and their documentation of the process used. Scores were combined with the test scores to determine a rank order of the contestants.

Coming in first place was Ian Thibeault of Caribou, with Jeff Rossignol of Stockholm placing second and Jeff Johnson of Westfield placing third. Also competing were Colby Conroy of Woodland and Sean Schniederat of Caribou. Johnson will now go on to compete in the state SkillsUSA competition to be held in Bangor in March, since the highest placing student who is also a member of SkillsUSA is chosen to progress from the regional competition.

"This is a great experience for my students," said Lisa Anderson, electronics/computer servicing instructor at the Caribou Regional Applied Technology Center. "In addition to practicing for the SkillsUSA competition in March, this gives them the opportunity to have a problem set up by someone other than me, as well as the chance to collaborate with folks who they may work with in the future and to see former students from this program succeeding at the college level."

Anderson noted that she also finds it personally rewarding to see her former students succeeding at NMCC. Three of her former students, now enrolled in NMCC's computer electronics program, were on hand when she and her group came to campus on January 20.

“This is a great partnership that benefits both the regional technology center and the College,” said McLaughlin. “These students have already expressed an interest in working with computers, and having them visit our lab and see what we do here can lead to them deciding to come to NMCC. My students benefit as well. Not only does their role in this competition give them a chance to experience a teaching moment, but it allows them to put a lot of the safety skills and troubleshooting methods which they've learned in class to use as they judge the work of these high school students.”

According to both McLaughlin and Anderson, this collaboration is an extension of the strong partnership that already exists between the two programs and schools. McLaughlin serves on Anderson's advisory committee and provides technical and educational support when needed. Anderson plays a similar role on McLaughlin's program advisory committee.

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*High school students from the Caribou Regional Applied Technology Center traveled to Northern Maine Community College on January 20 to take part in a regional SkillsUSA competition in computer maintenance technology. Taking part in the competition from the CRTC were, front from left: Lisa Anderson, computer servicing instructor at the Caribou Technology Center and her students Ian Thibeault of Caribou, Jeff Johnson of Westfield, Sean Schneiderat of Caribou, Colby Conroy of Woodland, and Jeffrey Rossignol of Stockholm. Working with the group of high schoolers was, back from left: Joseph McLaughlin, NMCC computer electronics instructor, and his students Pierre Gagne of Portage Lake, Shawn Morin of Caribou, Jesse King of Presque Isle, Luke Dube of Ashland, Scott Rossignol of Caribou, Doug Ewing of Caribou, Buddy LaCombe of Mapleton, and Gerald Belanger of Caribou.*