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# 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 Foundation awards instructional technology endowment grant awards

**Aroostook County** - The latest equipment purchased through a fund designed to provide Northern Maine Community College students with experiential learning opportunities through technology will benefit both students and the environment.

The NMCC Foundation Investing in Innovation Fund was established in 2008 through the first ever major gifts campaign at NMCC in part to ensure area employers have a pool of highly qualified employees. The fund recently awarded grants to two faculty members in the trade and technical occupations department at NMCC. The funds are proving especially meaningful in the current fiscal environment as they are providing for purchases of new technology that might not otherwise be possible.

The first project funded was the purchase of two Basic Fiber-Optic Termination Tool Kits that will benefit the computer electronics, electrical construction & maintenance and wind power technology programs. Over \$1,000 was allocated to support this project, and as many as 78 students per year will benefit from the tool kits.

“Advisory committee members from each of the programs involved have been requesting exposure to this technology for a few years,” said Chuck Kelley, NMCC electrical/electronics instructor. “These kits allow students to terminate and inspect the most common fiber optics data connectors, a function they will perform when they go out in the workforce.”

For the second project, the Investing in Innovation Fund provided over \$700 for the purchase of two TEKNA waterborne paint kits for the automotive collision repair program. “These kits will be replacing existing spray guns to better comply with several mandates put in place to reduce the amount of VOC’s (Volatile Organic Compounds). The new system is a ‘green’ alternative to automotive refinishing, producing fewer emissions and less hazardous waste for disposal,” said Bob Collins, NMCC automotive collision repair instructor.

The Investing in Innovation Fund was developed through the “Campaign for the County’s College” in response to what area business and community leaders told NMCC officials regarding the importance of educating and training the County’s future workforce using technology that was reflective of what was being used in area businesses, as well as what technology would be needed moving forward.

The fund was also created to address the fact that budget cutbacks and the rising cost of energy have created significant challenges in the area of funding instructional technology.

Applications for the most recent round of grant awards were prepared by faculty and staff over the past several months and submitted to a committee comprised of NMCC Foundation board representatives, as well as College faculty and staff members.

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*Northern Maine Community College instructors Bob Collins (far left) and Charles Kelley (far right) show the new equipment they purchased with NMCC Foundation Investing in Innovation Funds to some members of the fund review and selection committee (center, left to right) Heidi Graham and Shawn Lahey, NMCC employees and Brian Hamel and Carl Flora, NMCC Foundation Board members who serve on the committee.*