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NMCC and PI Kiwanians invite community to “open house” for Sinawik #34

Aroostook County - Hammers have been pounding and saws buzzing since early November in the residential construction laboratory at Northern Maine Community College as work on the 2011 Sinawik House has been underway. As the home building project, now in its 34th year nears completion, students and faculty are inviting the community to come view their handiwork at a community open house and barbecue on Tuesday, April 26, between 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. in the Mailman Trades Building at NMCC.

The 1,400 square foot modular ranch-style home, one of the larger Sinawik Homes in recent memory, sits in two pieces inside the residential construction facility at the College. It is there where more than four dozen students and their instructors in five trade and technical occupations programs have spent the past six months making the family home become reality, and at the same time getting a hands-on learning experience unlike any other.

For over three decades, the College and Sinawik (Kiwanis spelled backward), a non-profit organization founded by the Presque Isle Kiwanis Club, have partnered to build a home each year that is contracted by, and sold to, a family. This year, Terrence and Carolyn Hanlon, who live in the Portland area but plan to re-located to Aroostook County, will make Sinawik 34 their retirement home in Chapman.

The Hanlons will be present at the celebration on April 26 as the official hosts alongside NMCC and Kiwanis Club. The event will feature a barbecue lunch and tours of the new home and a brief ceremony where the work of the students and the importance of the partnership between NMCC and Kiwanis on the project will be recognized.

“The Sinawik project is still as beneficial as it was when it began 34 years ago, and it is especially so with greater than ever emphasis on building the most energy efficient homes possible. The partnership with Kiwanis provides us with a large-scale project that students see through to completion and the end result is a home for a family,” said Guy Jackson, NMCC’s residential construction instructor, who marks his 30th year working on the Sinawik project with number 34. Over those three decades, he has shepherded the work of nearly 400 students on the various projects.

The partnership between NMCC and Kiwanis was forged in 1976 to provide students in several trade programs at then Northern Maine Vocational Technical Institute with a “real-life” practical experience, and as a way for Kiwanis to raise scholarship funds to invest in the local community.

The annual event includes tours of the new home and an indoor barbecue, as well as the presentation of scholarships from Kiwanis to five students enrolled in the College programs that work on the structure.

“The Presque Isle Kiwanis Club is very proud to be partnering with Northern Maine Community College on the 34th Annual Sinawik House. From students working on the project, to individuals that have been given the opportunity for homeownership, to the many local charities that Kiwanis supports, many local lives have been touched by this collaborative effort,” said A.J. Cloukey, president of the Kiwanis Club. “The Sinawik project truly is a showcase of the positive Aroostook County ‘help a neighbor’ attitude. We look forward to co-hosting the annual open house and barbecue to showcase the work of the NMCC students, and also to call attention to the ongoing partnership between the Presque Isle Kiwanis Club and NMCC.”

The project begins anew each year at the beginning of the fall semester. Preliminary floor plans are developed by the College’s computer-aided drafting program and approved by the customer.

Once the plans are handed over, framing work on the walls, doors, windows and roof is completed by the first-year students in Jackson’s program. They then step away from the project and let students in the plumbing and heating program, instructed by Al St. Peter; the electrical construction and maintenance program, instructed by Todd Maynard; and the welding and metal fabrication program, instructed by Dennis Albert, do what is referred to as the “rough-in” work.

Once the plumbing and heating conduits are installed, the wiring laid and required ductwork is in, the structure is inspected. After the inspection the senior residential construction students come in and do the finish work, which is now in the finishing stages and has consisted of installing windows, doors and cabinets and completing the interior trim.

Sinawik 34 – the Hanlon home – features two bedrooms, two and a half baths, a home office, a kitchen/dining area and living room. A foundation for the raised ranch will be poured in the coming weeks at the corner of the Grendell and Littlefield Roads in Chapman. A breezeway and garage will be added to the home on-site.

The public is invited and encouraged to visit the Sinawik open house at NMCC on Tuesday, April 26, between 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. For more information on the project or the open house, contact the college relations office at 768-2809.

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Work on the 34th Sinawik House at Northern Maine Community College is nearing completion as the College and Presque Isle Kiwanis Club prepare to host an open house and barbecue on April 26 for community members to view the student's work. Busy working on the project are (left to right) Kim Rotge of Presque Isle, a residential construction student; Guy Jackson, NMCC residential construction program instructor; Todd Maynard, NMCC electrical construction and maintenance instructor; and Ken Crandall of Island Falls, an electrical construction and maintenance student.