



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 computer electronics instructor Joseph McLaughlin and senior students in his program. The regional contest serves as a preliminary for the state SkillsUSA competition and has been hosted at NMCC for the past two years.

The event consists of a written exam 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 seven participating students was assigned a single computer to troubleshoot and tasked with determining the problem and documenting the steps necessary to repair the unit. They 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.

The top contestant was Philip Griffeth of Caribou, followed by Dan Wardwell of Caribou and Josh Mowbray of Washburn.

"SkillsUSA provides students with the opportunity to develop and enhance their technical and workplace skills. This competition is an opportunity for my students to meet and interact with students who are further along in their technical education," said Lisa Anderson, electronics/computer servicing instructor at the Caribou Regional Applied Technology Center. "Holding our local SkillsUSA competition at NMCC exposes my students to new possibilities for the future. This experience provides a glimpse of what it is like to attend college and of challenges that they may face at NMCC. They also have the opportunity to network with people who may be their future coworkers or employers."

According to both Anderson and McLaughlin, that was certainly the case in the first year the regional competition was held at NMCC. Last year's overall top scorer, Matt McDonald of Caribou, is now enrolled in the computer electronics program at the Community College.

“This allows the high school students to visit the computer electronics lab and see what we do and the equipment we have. This is a great partnership that benefits both the regional technology center and the College,” said McLaughlin.

Work on the competition begins far in advance of the actual event. McLaughlin provides an internet-based study guide for the students to access and practice a month before the students visit NMCC.

After the competition, McLaughlin spends time explaining what was wrong with each of the computers and giving the students some overall troubleshooting tips.

“I am so pleased that we partner with NMCC for our local SkillsUSA Competition. Having the NMCC seniors help with this competition is a wonderful opportunity for both our students and the College students to gain educational and technical skills,” said Anderson. “This is an extension of the strong partnership that already exists between our programs and our schools.”

McLaughlin serves on Anderson’s advisory committee and provides technical and educational support when needed.



Students from the Caribou Regional Applied Technology Center recently participated in the SkillsUSA regional competition at Northern Maine Community College in Presque Isle. Participants included (front - left to right) Jared Reed of Washburn, Lyndsay Clark of Fort Fairfield, and Jessie Tirrell of Caribou. Also taking part were (back - same order) NMCC computer electronics instructor Joseph McLaughlin, students Philip Griffeth of Caribou, Travis Conley of Washburn, Josh Mowbray of Fort Fairfield, Dan Wardwell of Caribou, and Lisa Anderson, instructor at the Caribou Regional Applied Technology Center.