



NMCC Media Contact:
Jason Parent
(207) 768-2808
jparent@nmcc.edu

PI Historical Society Contact:
Kim Smith
(207) 764-3721 ext. 630
ksmith@acap-me.org

News Release

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NMCC to host series of Presque Isle Historical Society presentations on key aspects of County history as part of 50th Anniversary community events

Aroostook County – Over the coming months, the Presque Isle Historical Society will host a series of presentations on key happenings that have shaped the history of the region. The sessions, which are open to the public at no charge, will be held on the Northern Maine Community College campus in the Edmunds Conference Center as part of the community activity surrounding the institution's 50th Anniversary.

Featured topics include the historic Double Eagle II balloon flight on July 6, the Bloodless Aroostook War on September 7, and the history of the Presque Isle Army Air Base on December 7. All three forums will begin at 5:30 p.m. and run for an hour. Plans are currently in the works to also offer the presentation on the Bloodless Aroostook War in the St. John Valley on the University of Maine at Fort Kent campus. More details on the time and specific location will be announced once the talk is scheduled.

“Hosting presentations on topics of local historic interest is a key part of fulfilling the mission of the Presque Isle Historical Society. Northern Maine Community College understands the importance of engaging residents in their local history and is always very supportive of our mission. It is even more meaningful that the two organizations are partnering for such presentations during the 50th anniversary celebration of NMCC, an institution that has contributed greatly to this community over the last five decades.” said Kim Smith, secretary/treasurer of the Presque Isle Historical and lead presenter for each of the planned talks.

NMCC officials offered space on the campus for the historical society to hold the presentations as part of the campus' ongoing 50th anniversary celebration. Smith conducted a public presentation on the history of the campus that served as the unofficial kick-off to the series at NMCC in mid-April at a dinner event that also served as the annual meeting for the NMCC Alumni and Friends Organization.

“The word and concept of ‘community’ that is prominent in the name of our college is one that our students, alumni and employees take to heart,” said Jason Parent, NMCC director of development and college relations. “The involvement of our people in their local communities and the service that the institution provides to the region is very important to who we are as a campus community. Hosting these sessions both recognizes the importance of community to NMCC and further acknowledges that the people and events that have shaped our region in the past define who we are today. We are pleased to again partner with the Presque Isle Historical Society to help inform the public about the rich heritage of the place we call home.”

NMCC and the Presque Isle Historical Society have partnered on a number of initiatives in recent years. During Presque Isle’s Sesquicentennial in 2009, a year-long celebration chaired by Smith, the community college campus served as the host site for the city’s official birthday party. The campus also constructed the Star City Star which first ushered in the New Year in 2009, and has since become the highlight of the annual Star City First Night celebration. The historical society has also hosted a number of other public presentations on numerous historical topics at NMCC in the intervening years. For her part, Smith serves on the NMCC 50th Anniversary Steering Committee and has played a significant role in the hosting of activities surrounding the celebration, including the sock-hop themed 1960’s kick-off event in January.

She has researched and written over thirty presentations of topics of interest on Presque Isle’s History. Smith has presented these topics to the “Seniors Achieving Greater Education (SAGE)” Program at the University of Maine at Presque Isle; as the “Brown Bag Lunch Lecture Series” at the public library; and for various organizations. She also researched, prepared, and implemented a “Guided Walking Tour of Historic Downtown Presque Isle”, a two-hour, two-mile tour given for free monthly and upon request. In addition, she, in working with a joint City and Historical Society Committee wrote and implemented a “Self-Guided Walking Tour” that features 28 plaques around town with vignettes detailing the historical significance of each property as well as historic photos of the sites.

Smith has earned the Silver and Gold level awards from the President’s Council on Service and Civic Participation for her volunteerism with the Presque Isle Historical Society. This volunteer time is given in addition to working full-time and serving as an adjunct instructor at the University of Maine at Presque Isle, Northern Maine Community College, and for the Graduate Program at Husson University.

Smith was named Presque Isle’s Citizen of the Year for 2009 by the Presque Isle Area Chamber of Commerce for “her enthusiastic leadership of the Sesquicentennial celebrations and her untiring participation in Presque Isle Historical Society.” She is a long-standing member of MENSA and a member of Sigma Beta Alpha, the international honor society of Business Administration.

For more information on the upcoming historical presentations, contact the NMCC college relations office at (207) 768-2809 or e-mail info@nmcc.edu.

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