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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 to mark Constitution Day September 16 with special focus on citizenship and naturalization

Aroostook County - September 17 does not resonate with the general public to the extent of July 4 or November 11, but the significance of the day certainly parallels in importance when it comes to the freedoms many Americans take for granted.

On September 17, 1787, the course of American History was dramatically changed with the signing of the U.S. Constitution by thirty-nine brave men. In recent years the day, now known as Constitution Day, is set aside as a time to reflect on the birth of our government and ideas that make us Americans.

In 2004, the law establishing Constitution Day was enacted. The act mandates that all publicly funded educational institutions provide educational programming on the history of the American Constitution on that day or an adjacent weekday.

At Northern Maine Community College, Constitution Day events will be held on Friday, September 16, and are open to the public. This year's theme will focus on citizenship and naturalization, and activities include a video presentation, an appropriately themed luncheon, the opportunity for students and community members to take a naturalization test to see what people from other countries experience as they become a U.S. citizen, and the official opening of an exhibit by a Franco-American wood carver.

Constitution Day at NMCC gets underway at 11:30 a.m. with a feast featuring different foods representing the cultural diversity of the country and culinary tastes representing nations from which large populations have immigrated to the United States. The special lunchtime meal, open to the public, will be served in the Reed Dining Commons and runs through 1:00 p.m.

Complete with dishes from Italy, Mexico, China, French Canada and other parts of the world, the Aramark Dining Service staff at NMCC is inviting the community to come to campus for lunch and a culinary tour around the world. Cost for the meal will be \$6, payable at the door.

Following lunch, at 1:00 p.m., the NMCC Library will host the viewing of a video entitled *A Conversation on the Constitution with Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg on the 14th Amendment*. Incorporating three integral constitutional tenets -- due process, equal protection, and privileges and immunities -- the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was originally intended to secure rights for former slaves, but over the years, it has been expanded to protect all people.

The video features Justice Ginsburg and a group of students gathered at the Supreme Court discussing the importance of the 14th Amendment and how it came to embody and protect the principle of "We the People." It was produced by The Annenberg Foundation Trust and has been made available to colleges and universities around the country to view as part of Constitution Day activities on campus.

Following the viewing of the video, the College Library will host an official opening reception at 2:00 p.m. for an exhibit of wood carvings by Franco-American Artist Tom Cote of Limestone. The exhibit features nearly two dozen works by Cote and two of his apprentices.

Aside from viewing of the video, the NMCC Library will offer students and community members the opportunity to both test their knowledge about the U.S. Constitution and the basic tenets of our system of government by taking a sample naturalization test. The test, along with a video clip featuring a naturalization ceremony, will be available in the library between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

For more information on any of the Constitution Day activities, contact the college relations office at 768-2809.

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