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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

Author of provocative new book on Maine-New Brunswick border to hold reading, talk and book signing at NMCC

Aroostook County - An award-winning author and journalist, whose latest book tackles the Maine-New Brunswick border in a revealing and thought-provoking way, will introduce his work at an event in Presque Isle on Thursday, October 6, at 1:00 p.m. in the Edmunds Library at Northern Maine Community College.

Jacques Poitras will read from his new book, *Imaginary Line: Life on an unfinished border*, and lead a discussion on the topics covered in the publication, including how activity along the international border serves as a microcosm for relations between the U.S. and Canada. In addition, Poitras will sign copies of the book, which will be available for sale at the signing event.

The Presque Isle event, hosted by NMCC, comes just two weeks after the book was officially launched at the Legislative Library of New Brunswick in Fredericton. Published by Goose Lane Editions of Fredericton, the book tackles the challenges, obstacles and opportunities that exist along the “longest undefended border” through the lens of those who experience it day in-day out.

According to information released by the publisher, in *Imaginary Line*, Poitras “shows how for centuries, friends, lovers, schemers, and smugglers have successfully reached across the line. Now, post-9/11, mounting political paranoia has led to a sharp divide, disrupting the lives and welfare of nearby residents.”

Included in the book are stories that speak to the changes and challenges along the boundary since September 11, such as that of an elderly Canadian couple whose driveway touches the border. Poitras examines his assertion of “once friendly neighbors who have become increasingly isolated from each other.”

To write the book, Poitras traveled the length of the Maine-New Brunswick border, from Madawaska and Aroostook counties through Passamaquoddy Bay to a tiny island still in dispute, to uncover what he cites as “the history and ongoing dispute over an arbitrarily drawn line that shouldn’t be there, almost wasn’t there, and can be difficult to find even when it is there.”

At a time when many along the border are trying to establish renewed cross-border ties, such as leaders in both countries working on the 2014 World Acadian Congress, Poitras' book takes an edgy look at how "the stakes are high as New Brunswick and Maine re-imagine their relationship for the 21st century and communities strive to stay together despite the best efforts of parochial politicians, protectionists, and overzealous border officials."

Jacques Poitras has been CBC Radio's provincial affairs reporter in New Brunswick since 2000 and has reported on the New Brunswick-Maine relationship since his days as a reporter for the *New Brunswick Telegraph-Journal*. His journalism has been recognized by the National Newspaper Awards and the Radio and Television News Directors Association, and he has appeared on Radio-Canada, National Public Radio, and the BBC.

His controversial book *Beaverbrook: A Shattered Legacy* was shortlisted for the BC Award for Canadian Non-Fiction and the National Business Book Award, and won the 2008 Best Atlantic Published Book Award. He is also the author of *The Right Fight: Bernard Lord and the Conservative Dilemma*. He lives in Fredericton with his wife and two children.

The NMCC reading, book signing and discussion on *Imaginary Line: Life on an unfinished border* is free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served. For more information, contact Gail Roy in the Edmunds Library at NMCC at (207) 768-2734 or by e-mail at groy@nmcc.edu.

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Jacques Poitras