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# News Release

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## NMCC again selected as Focus the Nation College

### *NMCC to highlight green energy and weatherization programming and host FTN 2.0 Forum*

**Aroostook County** - The country's leading clean energy youth empowerment organization has again selected Northern Maine Community College as a national partner to raise awareness and move the country toward clean energy solutions. NMCC joins MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) as the only two schools in New England to carry the Focus the Nation banner in 2012.

Last March, after being selected by the organization as a partner campus, NMCC hosted one of 22 nationwide clean energy forums on its campus. The student-organized, day-long session called the "Maine Event" drew more than 100 participants from across the state and had the distinction of being the only such forum hosted in the northeast.

"We are thrilled to be working with Northern Maine Community College as a Focus the Nation campus again this year. Last year's event held at NMCC was one of the most successful FTN forums of the year," said Garrett Brennan, FTN executive director.

The Focus The Nation theme for 2012 participating colleges is "Forums-to-Action: Energy Innovation." The intent is to engage student leaders to "drive solution oriented clean energy collaborations between their campuses and communities" according to the FTN website.

Four student leaders on the NMCC campus have begun work as project coordinators, engaging with FTN staff based in Portland, Oregon. Two of the organizers were members of last year's team. Gene Martin of Mapleton, a senior in NMCC's business administration program, and Natalie St. Pierre of Presque Isle, a graduate student taking courses through Husson University's division of extended learning, are key members of the 2012 team. They have been joined by project newcomers NMCC students Nathan Woods of Rumford, a senior electrical construction and maintenance student, and Jessica Ouellette of Caribou, a senior in NMCC's business administration program.

The four students will participate in regular on-line training sessions and work in the coming weeks to organize a second state forum “FTN 2.0” tentatively scheduled for early March on the NMCC campus. A preliminary outline for the forum, prepared by the student group, includes a presentation on the latest work to connect northern Maine to the rest of the Maine and New England electric grid. That issue was cited at last year’s forum as the major roadblock to promoting alternative energy generation, particularly in Aroostook County.

The main part of the forum, however, will be focused on the emerging biomass energy industry in the region and its future development. NMCC is one of several public institutions in northern Maine to install or announce plans to add a biomass boiler to heat its physical plant. Biomass energy has also been key to the Mobilize Northern Maine Initiative, which has identified the alternative energy sector as a key industry to propel the Aroostook economy forward.

“Since our Clean Energy Forum last March there has been significant development in the alternative energy industry in Aroostook County, especially in the area of biomass,” said St. Pierre. “The ‘Maine Event’ in 2011 was more focused on wind energy and producing energy for export from the region. This year’s forum will be centered more on sustainability and how the biomass and other alternative energy industry can both support local industry growth while reducing dependence on foreign oil.”

St. Pierre and her colleagues are currently reaching out to prospective speakers and panelists to participate in the “FTN 2.0” event. The group plans to announce details of the forum by early February.

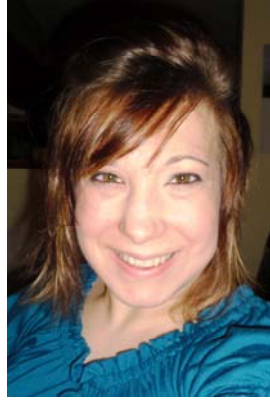
In addition to the Forum, FTN 2012 campuses are asked to plan and promote other projects and events to raise awareness and provide public education to the community relating to clean energy and energy conservation. The NMCC student organizers are helping to promote two special course offerings through the College’s Continuing Education Division in the coming months. The Weatherization Technician and Energy Auditor Certification courses will both take advantage of new technology and equipment recently acquired by the campus.

Information shared at the NMCC forum last year identifying roadblocks and solutions to moving the renewable energy industry forward in Maine and nationally was submitted to the White House. Findings from the NMCC forum and the 21 others held around the country have since been used to help shape political dialogue around issues concerning clean energy.

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*Gene Martin*



*Natalie St. Pierre*



*Nathan Woods*



*Jessica Ouellette*