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The Foundation for Maine's Community Colleges commits first matching dollars for major NMCC projects

Aroostook County – The first contribution to support two major projects at Northern Maine Community College, made possible through a \$5 million private gift announced earlier this month, has come from The Foundation for Maine's Community Colleges.

The organization dedicated to ensuring that the state's community colleges have the resources they need to provide a high quality, affordable and accessible college education for Maine people has committed \$300,000 to NMCC. The funds come from the many generous donors – including Maine businesses, statewide foundations, and private individuals – who have made unrestricted gifts to the Campaign for Maine's Community Colleges.

“Contributions from these donors will make a difference in the lives of many current and future students at NMCC, and around the state, who will benefit from the improvements to the NMCC campus,” said former Governor John R. McKernan, Jr., chair of the board of The Foundation for Maine's Community Colleges.

A \$5 million gift from Mary Barton Akeley Smith, announced by the NMCC Foundation on February 8, will provide the lion's share of the \$6 million needed to renovate and repurpose two existing facilities at NMCC. The 9,000 square foot building which now houses the college dining commons on the north end of campus will be transformed into the Rodney Smith Center for Fitness and Occupational Wellness in honor of the donor's late husband. The 14,000 square foot facility that is now the college gymnasium and sits in the center of the campus will become the new Akeley Student Center in honor of Mary Smith's parents and family.

The \$300,000 contribution from The Foundation for Maine's Community Colleges will be used to assist in financing the necessary design and architectural work that begins immediately before construction on the project can get underway late this summer.

“The support of The Foundation for Maine’s Community Colleges and the donors who made this gift possible is greatly appreciated,” said NMCC President Timothy Crowley. “With this gift, the support of our own NMCC Foundation moving forward and other generous donors who we will be approaching in the coming weeks and months, these two transformative projects will come to life on our campus and in turn assist greatly in our efforts to create a healthier and more competitive workforce for The County and state.”

To ensure both facilities best meet the needs of intended users, the College has formed an advisory group to work with the architect designing the plans. The committee has representation from the NMCC student body, alumni, college employees and community members. Mary Smith has agreed to serve on the group and will travel from California to Presque Isle to take part in the first meeting.

“We’d like to thank the donors who made this gift from The Foundation for Maine’s Community Colleges to NMCC possible and which will help gain additional support from the NMCC community,” said Beth Shorr, president of The Foundation for Maine’s Community Colleges.

The Campaign for Maine’s Community Colleges was launched in 2010 to raise a minimum of \$10 million to support the continued growth of the state’s seven community colleges. To date gifts to the Maine Community College System and The Foundation for Maine’s Community Colleges total over \$23 million. Funds raised support capital upgrades, equipment and technology, academic programs and student financial aid throughout the Maine Community College System.

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About the Foundation for Maine’s Community Colleges

The Foundation for Maine’s Community Colleges was incorporated in November 2009 and is dedicated to ensuring that the state’s community colleges have the resources they need to provide a high quality, affordable, and accessible college education for Maine people. More information is available at: <http://www.maineccfoundation.org/>

About The Maine Community College System

The Maine Community College System is Maine’s comprehensive two-year college system offering nearly 300 career and transfer options, continuing education, and customized training for business and industry. The seven community colleges are located in Auburn, Bangor, Fairfield, Presque Isle, South Portland, Calais, and Wells. Off-campus centers are located in Augusta, Bath, Brunswick, Damariscotta, Dover-Foxcroft, East Millinocket, Ellsworth, Houlton, Madawaska, and South Paris. For more information, visit www.mccs.me.edu.