



# News Release

*Contact:*  
**Jason Parent**  
Development and  
College Relations Office  
33 Edgemont Drive  
Presque Isle, ME 04769  
Phone: (207) 768-2808  
Fax: (207) 768-2813  
jparent@nmcc.edu

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## **NMCC and Presque Isle Kiwanis plan community celebration to mark building of 30<sup>th</sup> Sinawik home**

**Aroostook County** - Officials with Northern Maine Community College and the Presque Isle Kiwanis Club are inviting The County community to join in a celebration 30 years in the making.

For three decades, the College, in particular the trade and technical occupations department, and Sinawik (Kiwanis spelled backward), a non-profit organization founded by the Presque Isle civic organization, have partnered to build a home each year that is contracted by, and sold to, an Aroostook County family.

With work on the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary home nearing completion in the residential construction lab at NMCC, the College and Kiwanis club are hosting a community open house celebration on Tuesday, April 24, between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. in the Mailman Trades Building.

“This is a significant milestone for the College, Kiwanis and the communities we serve. For 30 years our faculty and students have done outstanding work on homes that are now found in communities throughout Aroostook County. We want to celebrate this achievement with the community,” said NMCC President Timothy Crowley.

The event, complete with tours of the new home, an indoor barbecue and live band, will include presentations by College and Kiwanis officials on the thirty year history of the program, and a video featuring interviews with students and faculty members who have worked on Sinawik number 30.

The partnership between NMCC and Kiwanis was forged in 1976 to provide students in several trade programs at then Northern Maine Vocational Technical Institute with a “real-life” practical experience, and as a way for Kiwanis to raise scholarship funds to invest in the local community. Among the scholarships given by Sinawik each year are five awards to NMCC trade and technical occupation students who work on constructing the home.

“Sinawik is a unique collaboration and one that produces wonderful benefits to all parties involved. The homes are well built, good quality homes,” said Diane Green, president of the Presque Isle Kiwanis Club. “There is no better way for the students in the involved trade programs to get practical hands on experience in their chosen field of study than to build the ‘real thing.’ I have no doubt that being involved on a Sinawik home project makes them a more attractive candidate to a potential employer.”

Work on Sinawik number 30 began over a year ago when Rino and Susan Marquis were selected as the future homeowners. The Marquis, who currently reside in Caribou but will be locating the home on 1.28 acres of lakeshore property along Long Lake in Sinclair, immediately sat down with Roger Crouse, NMCC computer aided drafting instructor to draw up plans for their home.

Crouse, the longest serving faculty member on the Sinawik house building project has worked on plans for 28 of the 30 homes. He, along with a senior student in his program, are the first contacts with the College for every homeowner selected by Sinawik.

“I’ve had a very positive experience with the coordinators in the past. I’ve always had very competent and self-disciplined individuals to work with. This is a highly visible project that reflects the skills and learning of NMCC students in the building trades,” said Crouse.

The plans drafted by Crouse are turned over to faculty and students in four different trade programs at NMCC: residential construction, plumbing and heating, electrical construction and maintenance, and welding and metal fabrication, all of whom are responsible for separate, yet interconnected, parts of the construction project.

For 26 of the last 30 years, a key person in that equation has been Guy Jackson, residential construction instructor.

“I feel really good about the success of this project. Working on these homes, and then seeing them throughout the community is so rewarding for our students and for the faculty who work on them. Ten years from now, our students will be able to drive by this home and tell their children, ‘I built this house while I was in college,’” said Jackson. “It’s a great hands-on experience that involves the instructors from each of these programs and this year involved more than 50 students. Among the most important lessons the students learn is the importance of working with the customer’s preference. It is a valuable lesson for all of them who will go out into the workforce and have to first listen to what it is the person they are completing a job for wants to have done.”

This year’s customers, the Marquis have watched the home go from a first draft presented to them on paper by Crouse, to a nearly complete 1,300 square foot ranch style home.

“We are very excited about this house and have been enjoying watching the building process. We have nothing but praise for the faculty and students who have been working on our home. It has truly been a joy working with all of them. Everyone has been so accommodating and easy to work with and the quality of work has been outstanding,” said Rino Marquis. “We are looking forward to the open house at NMCC, and we really can’t wait until it is moved to the site and we can move in.”

It is that kind of enthusiasm and good will, along with celebration of the construction of the 30<sup>th</sup> Sinawik home, that College and Kiwanis officials want to share with the community at the upcoming open house.

“The benefits to the community through this project are multiplied many times over from the economic, educational, philanthropic, and personal perspectives. Anything this important is worth preserving and celebrating,” said Dan Lee, who chairs the Sinawik project.

Several community sponsors are joining with NMCC and Kiwanis to sponsor the celebration including Aroostook County Electrical Supply, Aroostook Music, Maine Potato Growers, Inc., Pytlak Construction, Inc., Redlon and Johnson, and WAGM-TV.

For more information on the Sinawik number 30 celebration, contact the NMCC college relations office at 768-2809.

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Northern Maine Community College electrical construction and maintenance instructor Charles Kelley observes Jan Perreault of New Canada, a student in his program, as he works on a light switch in the 30<sup>th</sup> home built by the College for the Sinawik project. The College will host a community celebration and open house to celebrate three decades of building homes on Tuesday, April 24.