



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 coordinates horse clinic expected to draw participants from throughout Maine and beyond

Aroostook County - An internationally renowned expert and pioneer in the study of wild horse hoof form and function will lead a three day clinic coordinated by Northern Maine Community College that is expected to draw horse owners, farriers, and veterinarians from throughout Maine and beyond to Aroostook County.

Gene Ovnicek of Penrose, Colorado, a certified master farrier with 40 years experience, will lead the Natural Balance Hoof Care Clinic, which will be held both on the NMCC campus and at the Horse-Talk Equestrian Center in Caribou on April 28, 29 and 30.

The workshop will cover various topics, beginning with a day-long session on Saturday, April 28, which is open to the public and will focus on hoof form and how it relates to hoof function.

The clinic will continue on Sunday, April 29, and Monday, April 30, with various demonstrations and hands-on training exercises specifically designed for farriers and veterinarians at the Caribou equestrian center.

Ovnicek will share both his experience as a farrier and information from other scientific research, which he has combined to develop a basis for treating and preventing equine lameness.

In addition to his research projects, teaching, and his position as president and chief technician of Equine Digit Support System, Inc., Ovnicek operates a complete farrier practice ranging from performance horses to lameness management and consultation.

Natural Balance information researched and compiled by Ovnicek has been published in several industry publications, including the *American Farrier's Journal*, *Anvil Magazine*, *Horse Illustrated*, and the *European Farrier's Journal*. He has also published chapters and sections in several major hoof care text books.

Efforts to bring the Natural Balance Hoof Care Clinic and Ovnicek to Aroostook County were initiated by Robert Solman, the former president of Solman Beverage Distributors of Caribou. The owner of a team of Clydsdales, Solman learned of the Natural Balance principles when he attended a Natural Balance clinic in Phoenix, Arizona.

For the past two years, he has been working with the continuing education division at NMCC to bring farrier classes to teach the principles of Natural Balance hoof care to The County.

Registration for the three-day clinic is \$250 per person in advance and \$300 at the door and includes lunch on all three days. Cost for attending the Saturday session only is \$25 per person or \$40 for a couple in advance and \$30 per person or \$50 for a couple at the door.

The April clinic is the first of two offerings presented by the Presque Isle College for horse owners and enthusiasts. On May 15, NMCC will become one of only two community colleges in the United States to offer classes on Natural Balance hoof care principles. The most up to date information derived from research by the leading veterinarians, farriers, and clinicians throughout the world will be available and taught at the College.

For more information on the upcoming clinic or NMCC farrier class offering in May, contact the continuing education division of the College at 768-2768.

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