



# News Release

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## **210 students graduate from NMCC; Senator Collins delivers commencement address**

**Aroostook County** - Two hundred ten students were awarded associate degrees, diplomas and certificates at the 44<sup>th</sup> commencement exercises at Northern Maine Community College on Saturday, May 19, in the College gymnasium. President Timothy Crowley presided over the ceremony and welcomed more than 1,200 family members and guests of the graduates.

U.S. Senator Susan Collins, a County native who was born and raised in Caribou and has been a strong supporter and advocate for higher education and the NMCC campus community, was the commencement speaker. In her remarks, Collins encouraged the graduates to give back to their state and community.

“I know you graduates are eager to get out there and show the world what you can do. The diplomas you receive today represent a great deal of hard work on your part, but they also represent a great debt you owe those who made it possible. There are many ways you can repay this debt. I urge you to apply your talent, energy, and enthusiasm right here in Maine. Whether at the beginning of your career or later on, Maine needs what you have to offer,” said Collins.

“Maine needs the entrepreneurs, the innovators, the risk-takers who will create the businesses and jobs of the future. Whether it’s joining the volunteer fire department or ambulance crew, helping out at your local school or hospital, serving on your town council or planning board, or participating in a service club, your community also needs you to volunteer, to get involved,” added Collins.

Only the 15<sup>th</sup> woman in history to be elected to the United States Senate, Collins is serving her second term in Washington. She is currently the ranking member and a former chair of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, which has jurisdiction over the Department of Homeland Security and is the Senate’s chief oversight committee.

As part of her address, Collins called attention to the fact that the NMCC campus “truly puts the word ‘community’ in community college.” She cited several examples of activities on the campus that both enhance student learning and serve the community.

Among them, Collins called attention to the work of students and faculty in five of the College trade and technical occupations programs on the building of the 30<sup>th</sup> Sinawik home project, a collaborative partnership between the Presque Isle Kiwanis Club and NMCC that has been going strong for three decades. She also cited a newly launched project this past academic year by the students and faculty in the early childhood education program, entitled “In Their Hands,” which involves the College students preparing lesson plans and materials to accompany books purchased and donated to area childcare facilities.

The Senator praised the College community for other recent accomplishments including the cooperative agreements reached this past year with Husson College and the New Brunswick Community Colleges, as well as business partnerships forged through the Maine Quality Centers with Louisiana Pacific and Aroostook Starch. In addition she commended faculty, staff and administrators for their work to gain recent accreditation from the National Institute for Metalworking Skills for the precision metals manufacturing program, a two year curriculum which Collins obtained federal funding to establish in 2003.

In particular Collins cited the work of NMCC to meet the growing demand for allied health needs in the region and pledged her support behind College efforts.

“NMCC’s commitment to delivering real value is evident in the continued certification of the nursing program, in the new medical assisting and medical coding programs, and in your expanding pediatrics curriculum. The proposed Northern Maine Allied Health Education and Training Center is an outstanding example of the vision that drives this school, and I am dedicated to helping secure the funding to make this vision a reality,” said Collins.

In his charge to the graduates, President Crowley also shared his sentiments on the responsibilities the class of 2007 now faces as they move forward with the lessons taught, both in and out of the classroom, during their time at NMCC.

“Education provides us with a wonderful opportunity to improve our lives. It brings with it the responsibility to improve the lives of others. An educated person assumes civic responsibilities that serve as the foundation of our democracy. Students need to be involved in their communities, their state and their country,” said Crowley.

In addition to hearing words of encouragement from Senator Collins and President Crowley, graduates heard from one of their own. Twenty-two year old Joey Cyr of Van Buren, a graduate earning an associate degree in automotive technology, was elected by his peers to address classmates at commencement. The 2002 graduate of Van Buren District Secondary School and honorably discharged corporal in the U.S. Army spoke poignantly of the high value he holds for his education.

“I was in the military for three years. While in the Army, a close friend and I would often talk about going home to get an education. I was fortunate to have this dream come true,” said Cyr. “However, three months before my friend and I were discharged, he got orders to go to Iraq. The day I came home, he left for Iraq. A month after he got there, he was killed by enemy fire. An education is something none of us can take for granted.”

The son of Charles and Judy Cyr of Van Buren enlisted in the U.S. Army and served overseas for two years in South Korea and one year at Fort Bragg, North Carolina before being honorably discharged in 2005.

During his two-years at NMCC, Cyr earned the respect of both his fellow students and the College faculty. He was selected by automotive technology instructor Dan Boyd as a student intern for the program this academic year.

Following the conferring of 148 associate degrees, 38 diplomas and 29 certificates, Crowley announced the winner of this year's President's Award. The honor is presented annually to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the college, meeting the needs of students, employees and the general public, as well as assisting in moving the College toward fulfilling its mission, vision and goals.

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***Editor's Note: A list of graduates, credential(s) earned, and hometown is enclosed in this packet, as is information on the President's Award recipient.***