



News Release

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Northern Maine Community College to offer eight week course to train professional farriers

Aroostook County - Northern Maine Community College is offering an eight week course to train professional farriers. The class, which will run from September 4 through October 26, comes on the heels of a successful workshop in equine hoof care hosted by the college this spring. That session was attended by more than 50 people from throughout Maine and the northeastern United States.

With the help and guidance of Gene Ovnicsek and the Equine Lameness Prevention Organization (ELPO), the College has developed the unique course for people wanting to learn the science of hoof care.

The instructor for the course is Bob Solman, a certified natural balance farrier and an ongoing student of the principles of Natural Balance as taught by Ovnicsek, a master farrier, researcher and clinician, and creator of the Natural Balance shoeing principles. With the introduction of the course, NMCC becomes only the third institution in the country to offer an exclusively Natural Balance approach to farrier education.

“Our goal for this course is to provide students with a high quality education, insuring a thorough understanding of the biomechanical function of the equine foot, the recognition and diagnosis of equine lameness, and the treatment and prevention of hoof problems as well,” said Solman.

The retired Aroostook County businessman and former president of Solman Beverage Distributors of Caribou is himself the owner of a team of Clydsdales. He first learned of the Natural Balance principles when he attended a Natural Balance clinic in Phoenix, Arizona, and is now committed to sharing his knowledge with others.

“The results that I have witnessed in treating equine lameness using the principles of Natural Balance are astounding. The understanding of how the foot works, the ability to diagnose a problem and prescribe a shoeing protocol that helps horses so much is rewarding,” said Solman. “Working with students who want to help horses and students who are interested in continuing education in this field is going to make a great difference in the health and well being of our equine friends. An educated farrier can help sound horses perform better and can help lame horses get sound again.”

Students will learn the whole horse anatomy and foot function, how to evaluate the horse's movement and foot mapping to recognize distortions, complete maintenance of barefoot horses, as well as prep and application of standard and natural balance shoes.

In addition to introductory course work and hands on basic forge work, participants will focus on the recognition of common lameness issues and how to treat minor pathologies, how to render first aid treatment to laminitic and foundered horses and develop a firm understanding of newfound abilities and limitations relating to hoof care.

Tuition for the course is \$5,775. NMCC is also offering an on-campus room and board package for students for an additional \$1,175 and financial loan packages are available for this course. More details can be found by visiting the College's web site at www.nmcc.edu.

Enrollment is planned for only six students. For more information or to register, call Leah Buck at 768-2768 or email lbuck@nmcc.edu.

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Gene Ovnicek, nationally and internationally recognized farrier demonstrates to attendees of a workshop held at Northern Maine Community earlier this spring the proper techniques of Natural Balance horse hoof care. In response to the success of the workshop and level of interest in the horse community, NMCC will offer a course taught by Robert Solman, a professional Natural Balance farrier, this fall.