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NMCC and Maine Quality Centers sign training partnership agreements with BurrellesLuce and Pattison Sign Group

Aroostook County - The skilled workforces of two central Aroostook County businesses received a boost today with the signing of two separate agreements that will provide state funding for Northern Maine Community College to coordinate education and training programs for over 40 new employees between the two organizations.

At a signing ceremony at NMCC, an official with the Maine Quality Centers program joined College leaders and representatives of the Presque Isle facility of BurrellesLuce and the Pattison Sign Group facility located on the Loring Commerce Center to announce separate training partnership agreements with each firm.

The collaborative efforts of NMCC and the Maine Quality Centers with BurrellesLuce and Pattison Sign represent a \$53,500 investment in the workforce of the region. Customized training will be provided to the employees at each business at no cost to the company or its workers.

“The partnerships with both BurrellesLuce and Pattison Sign Group, made possible through the Quality Centers program, represent a critical component of NMCC’s overall efforts to meet the workforce and economic development needs of Northern Maine. For many years NMCC has worked with businesses and organizations throughout Aroostook to meet the continuing education needs of regional employers. These two agreements are indicative of our strong and continued involvement in business retention and expansion efforts,” said NMCC President Timothy Crowley.

The Maine Quality Centers, an economic development initiative of the Maine Community College System, has been a partner in NMCC workforce development efforts over the past decade. The program provides job-specific workforce training for new and expanding businesses, and new employment and career advancement opportunities for Maine people.

“The Maine Community College System, through the Maine Quality Centers and NMCC, is pleased to support economic growth in Aroostook County with these two projects. NMCC has long been an active participant in Maine Quality Centers, proving it is not only an important resource for higher education services in Northern Maine, but also an effective partner for businesses looking to be more competitive,” said James McGowan, state director of the Maine Quality Centers, who participated in the signing ceremony.

The first of the two memoranda of agreement with BurrellesLuce represents a \$16,200 investment and provides for the continuing education division of NMCC to facilitate training for up to 26 employees in various areas identified as critical to the company’s growth. Sessions will cover topic areas including Microsoft Windows, Newsclip software training, media reader software training, and workshops in productivity and work ethics.

“BurrellesLuce relies upon a highly trained workforce to provide media relations and measurement services to our Fortune 1000, university, government and non-profit clients,” said Becky Frost, general manager at the BurrellesLuce facility in Presque Isle. “We are very pleased to receive training support from NMCC through the Maine Quality Centers as we expand employment at this location.”

The Pattison Sign Group project, totaling a \$37,300 investment in education and training at the Loring facility, involves fifteen new employees hired since January 2007. Among the areas covered include a ten-hour Occupational Safety and Health Administration course, welding, industrial ergonomics, first aid/CPR, a basic computer offering, and a session in lean manufacturing.

“Our objective with this training is to deliver customized training to our new employees, helping them to work safely, acquire new skills and increase competency levels,” said Hermel Landry, director of human resources for Pattison Sign Group. “The Maine Quality Centers program allows a company like Pattison Sign to stay and grow in Maine and to provide a safe work environment for our employees.”

Since the Maine Quality Centers program was established by the Maine Legislature in 1994, 198 expanding Maine businesses have been served, creating 10,729 new jobs statewide.

In Aroostook County, since the first joint NMCC/Maine Quality Centers program was initiated in 1997, more than 20 businesses have benefited from training partnership agreements, totaling an investment of more than \$1.5 million dollars in the region’s economy and over 1,000 new hires.

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Taking part in the signing ceremony to establish training partnerships between Northern Maine Community College, the Maine Quality Centers and two local businesses were, from left: Becky Frost, general manager at the BurrellesLuce facility in Presque Isle; Timothy Crowley, president of Northern Maine Community College; James McGowan, state director of the Maine Quality Centers; and Hermel Landry, director of human resources for Pattison Sign Group.