



News Release

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Northern Maine Community College to expand program offerings in the St. John Valley; officials want to hear from local community at October 25th session in Madawaska

Aroostook County - Within the coming weeks, Northern Maine Community College will open a new off-campus center in the St. John Valley at Madawaska High School as the County-based College continues to expand its service to the northernmost part of Aroostook. As final preparations are made to open the center, NMCC campus leaders are turning to the local communities to hear what program and course offerings would best meet the needs of the region.

An important step in that process will take place on Thursday, October 25, at 6:30 p.m. in the Madawaska High School Library, when College officials and representatives of the St. John Valley Adult and Community Education Collaborative host an open forum for business and community leaders. The purpose of the session is to hear directly from employers and others in the Valley about the current and anticipated future needs for education and training and to better learn how NMCC, in partnership with the adult education collaborative, can help ensure the region has a vibrant and viable workforce moving forward.

“We are interested and committed to delivering more programs and services to the people of the St. John Valley in the Valley,” said NMCC President Timothy Crowley. “We enjoy a strong relationship with the adult and community education centers in the local communities who have, for many years, delivered our courses and facilitated some program offerings for us in the region. Collaboratively, we are working to do more in the area. The October 25th session will provide us with the necessary information we need to move forward and plan for new offerings in the area that will have maximum positive impact on the Valley’s workforce and economy.”

Crowley is looking south at the success of NMCC’s off-campus center in Houlton, which is located in the Houlton Higher Education Center, as a model for development in the St. John Valley.

A key development at the southern Aroostook site in recent years has been the delivery, via a combination of distance education technology and local course and clinical offerings, of NMCC's associate degree nursing program. That initiative has been a joint partnership with Houlton Regional Hospital.

A recent survey conducted by the St. John Valley Adult Education Collaborative amongst healthcare organizations in the Valley indicates a high need for associate degree nurses in the northern region. As a result, discussions between NMCC officials and area leaders in the healthcare and education community concerning possible delivery of the NMCC ADN program in the Valley are ongoing.

Representatives from both NMCC and the Valley adult education centers will share the progress of this discussion with attendees at the October 25th session.

"We are enthused that the work of the stakeholders involved in the St. John Valley allied health initiative will likely result in NMCC allied health program offerings facilitated by the St. John Valley Adult and Community Education Collaborative at the St. John Valley Technology Center and other locations in the region," said Peter Caron, director of adult and community education for MSAD 27, who has served as convener of the discussions on the education and training needs of the allied health sector.

In addition to specific dialogue on the healthcare employment sector needs, NMCC and the Valley Adult and Community Education Collaborative co-hosted a College Info Night in Madawaska in August to hear from local residents about what courses and programs were of interest to them. The evening allowed attendees to discuss college offerings, financial aid opportunities, and non-credit options offered through the continuing education division, including the commercial truck driving academy.

"We are thrilled with the expanded collaboration between the St. John Valley Adult and Community Education Collaborative and Northern Maine Community College and enthusiastic about the prospect of increasing the availability of NMCC courses, programs and services to adults and high school students in the St. John Valley," said Christine Cowie director of adult and community education for the Madawaska School Department, who participated in the Info Night.

NMCC has also been involved in discussions at both the local and state level concerning training and other educational opportunities with Fraser Paper in the wake of the recent company downsizing. The College is prepared to work collaboratively with its sister campus, Kennebec Valley Community College, to deliver pulp and paper technology courses and curriculum as requested by the paper company.

Representatives of businesses throughout the St. John Valley and others interested in discussing the education and training needs the County's Community College could deliver in the region are encouraged to attend the open forum. Refreshments will be served.

For more information, contact Jason Parent in the NMCC development and college relations office at 768-2808.

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