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## News Release

October 26, 2007  
NR07111

# NMCC and UMPI to relay torch across Star City in advance of Election Day to raise awareness for Questions 2 and 3; “bond” fire planned for Election Night

**Aroostook County** - A torch that will be used on Election Night to light a “bond” fire and celebrate regional awareness efforts by the County’s college and universities about bond questions 2 and 3 will be ceremonially lit and relayed across the Star City on Monday, November 5.

Students, faculty and staff at Northern Maine Community College and the University of Maine at Presque Isle will participate in the torch relay that will officially get underway at 10 a.m. with a brief ceremony and rally on the NMCC campus in the courtyard area just outside the Christie Complex. The event will kick-off with the lighting of the torch and first leg of the relay.

“Aroostook – and specifically the three public institutions of higher education in the County – have a lot at stake on the November 6 ballot,” said NMCC President Timothy Crowley. “We have been working collaboratively with our friends at the University of Maine at Presque Isle and University of Maine at Fort Kent to get the word out about both question 3 – the higher education bond – as well as question 2, the research and development initiative. The torch relay across Presque Isle will serve both as an election-eve reminder of the importance of getting to the polls on Tuesday, and the significance of these two measures to the communities and people of the region.”

Escorted by emergency response vehicles from the Presque Isle Police Department and Presque Isle Fire Department, NMCC representatives will carry the torch to the corner of State and Main Streets in the downtown.

At that point, Crowley – who will serve as the final NMCC torchbearer – will hand it over to UMPI President Don Zillman, who will lead off the University section of the relay. University students and personnel will guide the torch to campus, and place it in a stand near the Gentile Hall parking area – the site of the “bond” fire that will be held at UMPI on Election Night.

The “bond” fire will begin at 8 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 6 in the open area behind Gentile Hall. Together, Presidents Zillman and Crowley will use the torch relayed from NMCC to UMPI to light the fire.

“We’ll light our bond fire to celebrate the closing of the polls and the hope for positive statewide election results. After so much effort to let our region know about the importance of these two referendum questions, this will be a wonderful opportunity to celebrate,” President Zillman said. “We welcome everyone from the university, the college and the community to attend this event and show the region’s strong support for higher education in northern Maine and the passage of these two referendum questions.”

The evening’s activities will be divided between the bonfire outside – hot chocolate and desserts will be served – and the lobby area of Gentile Hall, where participants can warm up and watch Election Night coverage.

Statewide approval of Question 2 would provide \$50 million to the Maine Technology Institute (MTI), which would award – on a competitive basis – research grants for projects related to advancing Maine’s economy. An additional \$3.5 million would be directed to the Finance Authority of Maine, and \$1.5 million is earmarked for the Maine Rural Development Authority.

Faculty, staff and students at Maine’s public universities could apply competitively for grants through MTI that would provide funding for innovation that will help Maine companies stay ahead of the global competition with new products, better and more efficient processes and the development of new materials that are sustainable.

Question 3 calls for \$43.5 million for interior and exterior building renovations, improvements and additions at all campuses of the Maine Community College System, Maine Maritime Academy and the University of Maine System. Altogether, County institutions would see an investment of more than \$3.5 million in the infrastructure of the three local campuses.

The University of Maine at Presque Isle stands to see \$1.4 million for renovations in Folsom/Pullen Hall, the main classroom and laboratory building on campus. Work planned would include an update of the heating and ventilation system, installation of new energy efficient windows, ADA accessibility improvements, and consideration of air to air heat pumps and solar panels as part of the university’s carbon neutral commitment.

Energy efficiency gains are also at the top of the list of projects to be completed at Northern Maine Community College. Through the bond package, a total of \$758,000 would assist NMCC in funding needed renovations in the Mailman Trades Building and the A.K. Christie Complex. The Mailman facility houses many of the college trade and technical occupation programs. The Christie complex serves as the primary campus classroom facility.

Work at the County's community college would include upgrades to heating and ventilation systems. Students in all programs will also benefit from new classroom technology.

In the St. John Valley, \$1.4 million would be directed to the University of Maine at Fort Kent to construct a new classroom building extension adjacent to Nadeau Hall. The facility would provide modern classrooms for student instruction and office space where faculty can prepare weekly class lectures, as well as offer students and faculty alike with state-of-the-art laboratories for research and experimentation.

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