



News Release

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NMCC accounting students to provide free tax assistance

Aroostook County - Area residents will once again be able to come to Northern Maine Community College in Presque Isle for free tax assistance this tax season. Senior accounting information systems students will be providing this service through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program several afternoons a week.

Offered at the College for more than 20 years, this free tax assistance program is sponsored jointly by the College, AARP and the Internal Revenue Service. Students handle approximately 1,000 returns a year through VITA. In addition to preparing the returns, the students also file them electronically at no charge.

The accounting students will be taking part in a one-week training session prior to VITA start-up. The training is being provided by Lowell Glidden, a retired IRS field agent and an AARP member, as well as College accounting instructor Robert Scott.

“Students get to supplement their course work by doing real taxes for real people,” said Scott. “The best reinforcement you can get is to put your skills to the test in the ‘real’ world. Businesses also recognize the value of both the training and the experience that this program provides our students, both in tax preparation and in developing customer service skills. This gives our students an advantage as they enter the job market, whether they enter directly after graduation or after going on to obtain a four-year accounting degree.”

The VITA program is intended for elderly and low income individuals. Those who can afford to do so or who have more complicated returns should contact a local professional tax preparer for assistance.

The VITA program will run on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons, from 1:00-4:00 p.m. Although VITA will begin on February 5, that first week of assistance will only be for senior citizens who are on social security and/or pensions. Others will not be able to be assisted until the week of February 11. The tax software that addresses the late changes in the AMT tax laws will not be available prior to February 11, so the students CANNOT process most returns until AFTER that date.

There are no scheduled appointments, rather individuals must come, sign in, and be helped on a first-come, first-serve basis. For shorter wait times, Scott encourages people who can do so to wait a few weeks before coming in for assistance.

This year's VITA program will be located in a section of the Edmunds Conference Center. Those who want to take advantage of this free service should park in the large general purpose parking lot just south of the main entrance and use the Edmunds Building entrance. The sign up sheet will be located in the Edmunds Building lobby.

The VITA program will not be offered during semester breaks, which are scheduled for the weeks of February 18-22 and March 31-April 4.

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