



News Release

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Southern Aroostook Region Two School of Applied Technology donates tractor trailer truck to Northern Maine Community College

Aroostook County - A tractor trailer that was once used to train commercial drivers in southern Aroostook County will now benefit students in two programs at Northern Maine Community College as a result of a generous donation by the Southern Aroostook Region Two School of Applied Technology.

The red 2000 International 9200I series truck once used by Region Two for its commercial driving license training program had largely sat idle since the program was suspended two years ago due to declining enrollment. As a result, school officials last summer decided to advertise for bids for the commercial vehicle with the intention of selling it to the highest bidder.

“It was then that I received a call from Dennis Dyer, the lead instructor and program coordinator for NMCC’s Commercial Driving Academy, inquiring about the truck. The phone call was followed by a letter from the major gifts campaign office at the College requesting that Region Two consider donating the commercial vehicle to the college for training and educational use by students in both the commercial driving program and diesel hydraulics technology program,” said Michael Howard, director of the Region Two School of Applied Technology.

The NMCC letter was presented to the Region Two board of directors at their regular meeting in late September, along with several bids that had been received by the school of applied technology to purchase the truck, including a high offer of just over \$40,000. After consideration, the board approved a motion to reject all bids and passed a second motion to proceed with the donation to NMCC.

“Although sale of the truck would have generated a nice sum of money, ultimately we recognized that the commercial vehicle was purchased for the purpose of education and training and that there was an obvious need within our region,” said Howard. “We work very closely with NMCC and a number of our students attend the Community College after they graduate from our program, so this is indicative of the great cooperative relationship between our schools.”

Instructors and students at NMCC are already making use of the new equipment. Individuals enrolled in the current session of the College's Commercial Driving Academy are the first to train using the commercial truck.

"This new truck is a very welcomed addition to our program. It is three years newer than our other road truck and has some different features than any other training vehicles we have. The anti-lock brake system (ABS) and the air ride suspension is a bit different feel than what our other trucks offer. It has a 15 speed transmission too, and most of the other trucks are 10 speed. We now have the opportunity to give the Commercial Driving Academy students a much better picture of what they will likely be driving when they get out there," said Leah Buck, NMCC's assistant dean of continuing education.

That is a clear advantage according to students like Nick Bryant of Nobleboro, who is enrolled in current session of the commercial driving licensure program and is also a second year student in the diesel hydraulics technology program, set to graduate from both this spring.

"It's a newer truck," said Bryant. "It is more like what we will be driving or working on in the workforce."

The 23-year-old is getting a firsthand experience with the truck from both behind the wheel and under the engine hood as he and his fellow classmates are servicing the commercial vehicle as part of their diesel hydraulics lab experience.

"The newer electronic controlled engine, anti-lock break system that we can diagnose and the heavier spec truck is more in line with what is commonly used here in northern Maine in terms of the forestry, agricultural and trucking industries," said NMCC diesel hydraulics instructor Robert Rice. "Working on this commercial truck will be very beneficial to our students."

"It does give us more up to date equipment to work on and the chance to experience what we will encounter in the shop after we graduate and are working," said diesel hydraulics student Mitch Holmes of Pemaquid.

Holmes and his classmate Chris Burns of Newcastle both graduated from NMCC's Commercial Driving Academy last April and are in their final semester of the associate degree diesel program.

"Having the opportunity to get my commercial drivers license and a two-year degree in diesel hydraulics gives me good preparation for the workforce. It will make me more marketable, as I will not only be able to work on diesel trucks and other heavy equipment, but also get to test drive them to ensure everything is working properly," said Burns.

The Region Two School of Applied Technology was established in 1973 to provide vocational education in the southern Aroostook area served by five high schools: East Grand, Hodgdon, Houlton, Katahdin, and Southern Aroostook Community School.

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Northern Maine Community College (left to right) Commercial Driving Academy lead instructor and program coordinator Dennis Dyer and Diesel Hydraulics instructor Robert Rice, joined by their students Nick Bryant of Nobleboro, Mitch Holmes of Pemaquid and Chris Burns of Newcastle, stand in front of the 2000 International 9200I series truck donated to NMCC by the Southern Aroostook Region Two School of Applied Technology.