



News Release

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Unique Donor Wall Recognizes Campaign Donors; Celebrates Aroostook County and the Talents of Local People

Aroostook County - A donor recognition wall designed locally and constructed by Northern Maine Community College students and faculty was unveiled during a reception on Friday, February 29, at the College celebrating the successful conclusion of the *Campaign for the County's College*.

The creative, one-of-its kind piece of art recognizes all of the individuals, businesses and organizations who have contributed to the highly successful major gifts campaign undertaken jointly by the College and the NMCC Foundation. Reflecting "The County" theme of the campaign, the base of the piece is a 6 x 5 foot oak cut out of Aroostook County, to which twelve metallic trees of varying sizes and colors are affixed listing all of the donors in the various giving levels for the campaign.

The piece was designed by Heidi Carter of Heidesign, the Fort Kent based marketing firm contracted by NMCC.

"After speaking with College officials about the campaign, it was clear that the Aroostook County outline was important to integrate somehow," said Carter. "One of the things I wanted to do was to make the connection to the County in other ways as well. That's when the concept of using spruce trees came into play. I also wanted to push that even further to connect the transformation of the trees to lumber...and that's where we came to using wood for the Aroostook outline. It offers symbolism to the metamorphosis that takes place after a giving campaign that is as successful as this one has been, is completed. As trees turned to lumber offers material that can be used to build incredible structures, money raised from a giving campaign can do equally amazing things to make positive changes for the institution."

Carter credits faculty members Guy Jackson, Dean Duplessis, and Dennis Albert, along with two of Duplessis' students, for providing invaluable input and creative energy that led her through several renditions of the piece.

"I have always been impressed with both the faculty and students at NMCC. I knew from working with these people on other projects that if anyone was going to be able to accomplish this, it

would be the people right here. The dedication to the project, the willingness to try new things, and to collaborate with one another, was amazing. I know there were some long hours pulled by both the students and faculty, but each time I spoke to any of them, there was only smiling faces and positive energy...even when faced with an obstacle. I think this speaks volumes of the instruction here and the futures that these students will have once out in the work force. As an artist, it is always awesome to see a figment of my imagination transform into reality, but even I did not foresee exactly how beautiful of a piece this turned out to be. It truly is an end result of everyone's creativity...not just mine," said Carter.

Residential construction instructor Guy Jackson was charged with building the Aroostook County base for the donor wall. Assisting him with the project was one of his seniors, David Riopelle of Mars Hill. The two spent approximately 40 hours completing their part of the project.

"We started with Heidi's design, which I projected onto a wall and sketched at the size desired for the final piece. We used red oak facing, which we laminated to a base to provide the depth and support we needed. One of the most challenging parts was cutting all the angles needed for the outline of the County. Altogether, there were 62 compound angles that each had to be bisected to make sure to get them to come out equal," explained Jackson.

"I really enjoy the challenge of working on something different like this," he said. "It was also a great learning opportunity for Dave, and indirectly for all of my students, to realize exactly how accurate you have to be, especially when you are hanging a project like this on the wall for everyone to see."

"I worked on a lot of angles. When I looked at the plan initially I said to myself - there is no way I can get all of these angles," said Riopelle. "But looking at the wall now, I am so pleased at how it turned out. I think it is awesome. I thank Mr. Jackson for giving me the opportunity to work on this project. He is a great teacher. Every time I walk by that wall - even years from now when I can show my own kids what dad did when he was in school - I will feel a sense of satisfaction knowing I had a part in creating the wall."

While Jackson and Riopelle were working on the base, Dean Duplessis, NMCC precision metal manufacturing instructor, and Justin McBreairey of Caribou and Robert Underwood of Presque Isle, both seniors in Duplessis' program, were hard at work on their portion of the project. Collectively, the three spent nearly 70 hours, both in and out of class, creating the trees which honor the donors.

"Using the data provided by Heidi, we utilized a CAM (Computer Automated Manufacturing) software program to develop the program for cutting the trees out of $\frac{3}{4}$ inch aluminum plates. We had to scale the trees for size requirements and apply machining operations," explained Duplessis. "After the twelve trees, which vary in both height and width, were cut, we shipped them to a coater in Gorham that anodized, or added color, to the trees...a different color representing each giving level. Once the trees were delivered back to us, we again used the CAM software to develop engraving programs to engrave 300 names of campaign donors."

One of biggest challenges the trio faced was the tight timeline. "We needed to meet an aggressive deadline, while allowing for both the time we needed in our lab for the project as well as the time required off-campus at the coater," said Duplessis. "I'm really proud of the commitment Justin and Robert made to this important project. They were willing to put in a lot of their own time to see this project to completion."

Neither McBreairty or Underwood seemed to mind the extra time, instead they were excited by the challenge the project presented and proud of the results.

“It was a big challenge and one of the more interesting projects I've ever worked on - definitely memorable,” said McBreairty. “I'm proud of it. We put a lot of work into it, and I'm really happy about how it turned out. I hope everyone will like it as much as I do. A lot of work and time went into this project and the result is definitely worth it.”

“This was a good chance to do something outside of the norm,” said Underwood. “It’s also really nice to do something that will be seen by a lot people.”

“Overall, this was a great way for all of us to be involved in a campus project. Investing our time and effort into this project is an opportune way to show our appreciation to those who so generously gave to this campaign to support the College and our students,” said Duplessis.

According to campus officials, the involvement of the faculty and students in completing the donor wall, which will serve as a visible, daily reminder of the *Campaign for the County’s College*, is especially fitting given the very reasons the fundraising drive was undertaken.

“We set out to raise dollars to support student scholarship, to enhance instructional technology, and to assist the College in our efforts to launch new curricula to respond to evolving community needs,” said Crowley. “Time and again as I visited with people in the community and in business and industry throughout Aroostook County to discuss the campaign, people shared with me how impressed they are with our campus community and the work of our faculty and staff who provide the top quality instruction and training. They see the positive results of what happens on our campus each day in their workforce and in their communities.”

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Northern Maine Community College officials recently unveiled a donor wall in the shape of Aroostook County to celebrate the successful completion of the Campaign for the County's College, which raised over \$2.5 million to support student scholarship, instructional technology, and to assist the College in meeting immediate community needs throughout Aroostook. The donor wall was completed by (left to right) Heidi Carter of Fort Kent-based Heidesign, who designed the piece; Dave Riopelle, NMCC residential construction student and Guy Jackson, residential construction instructor, who completed the wooden County frame; and Dean Duplesis, NMCC precision metals manufacturing instructor; and Justin McBreairty and Robert Underwood, both seniors in the precision metals program.