



# News Release

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## **NMCC to add machine tool technology certificate program in response to growing industry need**

**Aroostook County** - Bolstered by data showing projected shortages for machinists both here in Maine and nationwide, officials at Northern Maine Community College are introducing a new one-year, certificate level program in machine tool technology this fall designed to introduce the career option to students and help fill existing and anticipated vacancies.

Developed by Dean Duplessis of Van Buren, the lead instructor in NMCC's current associate degree in precision metals manufacturing program, the certificate option will be offered for the first time in September.

"The machine tool technology certificate program will provide students with the opportunity to develop and improve their skills and knowledge of conventional and computer numerical control machining. Students enrolled in the program will receive training on the latest equipment used in the industry," said Duplessis. "In addition to those students entering the College out of high school, the program will be of particular benefit to individuals who are already employed and may find the certificate increases their opportunity for promotion, or individuals who are looking for a career change and want to explore whether or not this is a good fit for them."

The greatest benefactor however, will be the metal manufacturing industry, which has a projected shortage of workers on both the state and national level. Results of a recent state-wide industry study released by the Maine Metal Products Association show that employers estimate just over 200 job vacancies will exist in the state over the next year. The report also indicates the projected number in the next two through six years will grow to over 450.

Nationally, a recent report by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics lists machinists as one of the top five professions projected to face a severe labor shortage through the year 2012.

"I endorse the NMCC certificate course as an innovative way to bridge the gap between an applicant pool that lacks fundamental manufacturing skills, and perhaps lacks the means and background necessary to pursue an associate level degree, and an industry that is experiencing a shortage of skilled workers," said Andrew Paul, human resource manager for Pratt and Whitney in North Berwick, Maine.

“I think the certificate level program has the potential of becoming a catalyst. As we continue to move forward with our efforts to gain accreditation through the National Institute for Metalworking Skills, students will earn credentials recognized nationally through a network of over 6,000 companies,” said Duplessis.

According to the instructor, the certificate program bears many similarities to the precision metals associate degree offering in that both offer instruction in all aspects of conventional machining. The certificate program however, will provide the student with introductory instruction in computer numerical control or CNC programming, setup and operations, whereas the associate level program continues with advanced CNC applications congruent with most modern machining companies.

Upon completion of the certificate program, a student may return for an additional year, take additional classes, and earn their associate degree.

The new machine tool certificate program was reviewed and unanimously approved by the NMCC precision metals manufacturing advisory committee, which is comprised of five industry and education leaders in related fields.

The group includes Mark E. Jones, co-owner, CAM Manufacturing; Mike Howard, director at the Southern Aroostook Vocational Education Center; Peter Ashley, instructor at Van Buren District Secondary School; Terry Wade, plant manager at Smith and Wesson; Wayne Kilcollins, engineer at ACME-Monaco; and Jim Williams, director of employer services at Presque Career Center. All recognize the need to attract more students to the trade and for the NMCC facility to serve as a viable training resource for local industry.

“The machine tool technology certificate is ideal for an individual who is presently employed in the trade in an entry level position looking to update their skills for possible advancement. It will also be of great benefit to current NMCC trade students enrolled in such programs as diesel hydraulics and automotive technology, who are entering into their second year of college and interested in pursuing a second major,” said Duplessis.

Applications for enrollment into the machine tool technology certificate are currently being accepted by the NMCC admissions office. For more information or to register, call (207) 768-2785 or visit the office in the Christie Building on the NMCC campus.

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