



Media Contact:

**Jason Parent**

**NMCC Development and  
College Relations Office**

(207) 768-2808

jparent@nmcc.edu

## **Press Release**

**December 19, 2008**

NR08119

### **Move over Times Square - NMCC students and faculty build large star to be risen in Star City on New Year's Eve as part of new tradition in the making**

*Presque Isle* - New York has its famous Times Square ball drop on New Year's Eve, and beginning this December 31st, Presque Isle – "The Star City" will have what community organizers hope will be a new tradition to ring in the New Year: the rising of - what else - a star. Thanks to the efforts of a dozen metal fabrication students at Northern Maine Community College and their instructor, Dennis Albert, it won't be any ordinary star, but rather an originally designed and constructed six foot tall, brightly lit object to welcome 2009 and, the hope is, many years to come.

Just last week, shortly before the fall semester ended at NMCC, Albert and his students completed the design and construction of the stellar piece, which is not only imposing in how tall it stands, but in its three-dimensional appearance. The finished product, which was fabricated using 26 gauge galvanized steel and held together with steel rivets, has the appearance of two very large barn stars joined back-to-back. At its center, the star measures a foot and a half wide.

"This has been a most worthwhile project for the students. Many live in the local area and will get to see the results of their work," said Albert. "Hopefully we are starting something that will begin a new tradition that locally will become as well recognized as what happens at Times Square in New York."

In addition to overseeing its construction, Albert has put the finishing touches on the star, adding more than a thousand lights to ensure a bright start to the New Year. The finished piece will be illuminated and raised just outside the Presque Isle Inn and Convention Center on Green Hill Drive, using the Presque Isle Fire Department ladder truck. Plans are for the star to reach the highest point at 12:00 midnight.

“I hope to see it,” said NMCC student Trent Legassie of Presque Isle, who worked on the star. “This is pretty cool and it is nice that we are doing something that will benefit the community.”

Legassie’s classmate, Mike Fitzsimmons of Limestone, agrees. “Ultimately the star will be shown off and be a public demonstration of the skills we have learned. In our lab we strive to develop a finished product and to do it well. As long as the community members who asked us to do this project are pleased with the final result, we will have done our job,” said Fitzsimmons.

The idea for the unique and localized take on the Big Apple’s time-honored tradition was discussed last month at a planning meeting for Presque Isle’s sesquicentennial, which will be marked with events throughout the coming year. Organizers thought it would be a great to mark the start of the celebration with a new event that could become a tradition for years to come.

“The Presque Isle Sesquicentennial Committee is very excited about kicking off both the New Year and the Sesquicentennial in such a unique manner. We are hoping it is providential that we are entering the sesquicentennial year with a star rising in the City,” said Kimberly Smith, president of the Presque Isle Historical Society and chair of the Sesquicentennial Committee.

Initially, Sesquicentennial Committee members had envisioned the event taking place somewhere in the downtown area, both to emulate the Times Square festivities and to dovetail with efforts of the Presque Isle Downtown Revitalization Committee. The fast approaching holiday precluded the planning of a large-scale event that would serve as a draw to the downtown, so a venue that would provide a built-in audience for the inaugural star rise was sought.

“The Presque Isle Inn and Convention Center was gracious enough to allow us to include the star rising as part of their popular New Year’s Eve celebration,” said Smith. “The star rising will serve as a highlight of the evening and truly enhance the festivities. We encourage community members to come out for what will be the official kick-off of the sesquicentennial year.”

Members of the Presque Isle Fire Department will do a test run with the star before the New Year’s Eve event to determine the length of time between when the star begins to rise and when it reaches its highest point to ensure that happens at exactly midnight.

The New Year’s Eve event at the Presque Isle Inn and Convention Center will feature the band “Unlucky Joe”, a popular County group. The band plans to play a mix of classic rock and new alternative rock according to band member and rhythm guitar player Derek Carlow.

“We plan to build excitement for the big happening throughout the evening and then stop playing just before midnight to draw everyone’s attention to the star rising,” said Carlow. “I think it will really help mark the New Year and moment we begin 2009, which should be a very memorable year for the city given the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration!”

Tickets to the New Year’s Eve celebration at the Presque Isle Inn and Convention Center are \$10 each in advance of the event and \$15 at the door. In addition to the great music and star rising activity, revelers will enjoy a complimentary champagne toast at midnight. For more information on the festivities or to purchase a ticket, contact the Presque Isle Inn and Convention Center at 764-3321

The star will also be used at a number of events during the coming sesquicentennial celebration, including at the Star City Star Search event planned for the Presque Isle Middle School on January 17, Presque Isle’s official 150<sup>th</sup> birthday party on April 4, and in the sesquicentennial parade planned for the coming summer.

#####



*Northern Maine Community College students in Dennis Albert’s metal fabrication program work on the six foot star that will rise in Presque Isle on New Year’s Eve, kicking off what organizers hope will become an annual tradition for the Star City. Working on the stellar project are (left to right) Mike Fitzsimmons of Limestone, Edward Bellanceau of Ashland, Albert, Keith Crouse of Caribou and Todd Doody of Washburn.*