



News Release

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NMCC hosts local SkillsUSA competition for area high school students

Aroostook County - Students enrolled in the electronics/computer servicing program at the Caribou Regional Applied Technology Center recently tested their knowledge in a skills competition hosted by Northern Maine Community College. For the fourth consecutive year, Joseph McLaughlin, NMCC computer electronics instructor, and some of the senior students in his program both set up and judged the regional contest which serves as a preliminary for the state SkillsUSA competition.

The event is a contest in computer maintenance technology. It consists of a written exam, which is the industry standard A+ certification exam and accounts for 15 percent of the total possible score. This is followed by a hands-on activity designed to measure the students' mastery of several fundamental computer repair tasks. The latter exercise is performed on individual computers that have been setup with a specific problem by NMCC students.

Each of the ten participating students was assigned a single computer to troubleshoot and tasked with determining the problem and documenting the steps necessary to repair the unit. They were scored on safety, troubleshooting skills, and their documentation of the process used. Scores were combined with the test scores to determine a rank order of the contestants.

Coming in first place was Doug Ewing of Caribou, with Walter Burlock of Van Buren and Scott Rossignol of Caribou, placing second and third respectively.

"SkillsUSA provides students with the opportunity to develop and enhance their technical and workplace skills. This competition is an opportunity for my students to meet and interact with students who are further along in their technical education," said Lisa Anderson, electronics/computer servicing instructor at the Caribou Regional Applied Technology Center. "Holding our local SkillsUSA competition at NMCC exposes my students to new possibilities for the future. This experience provides a glimpse of what it is like to attend college and of challenges that they may face at NMCC. They also have the opportunity to network with people who may be their future coworkers or employers."

Two of the students, Doug Ewing and Peter Deschaine, who participated in the skills competition, have applied for the Computer Electronics program.

“This allows the high school students to visit the computer electronics lab and see what we do and the equipment we have. This is a great partnership that benefits both the regional technology center and the College,” said McLaughlin. “My students benefit as well. Not only does their role in this competition give them a chance to experience a teaching moment, but it allows them to put a lot of the safety skills and troubleshooting methods which they’ve learned in class to use as they judge the work of these high school students.”

Work on the competition begins far in advance of the actual event. McLaughlin provides a study guide for the students to access and practice a month before the students visit NMCC.

After the competition, McLaughlin spends time explaining what was wrong with each of the computers and giving the students some overall troubleshooting tips.

“I am so pleased that we partner with NMCC for our local SkillsUSA Competition. Having the NMCC seniors help with this competition is a wonderful opportunity for both our students and the College students to gain educational and technical skills,” said Anderson. “This is an extension of the strong partnership that already exists between our programs and our schools.”

McLaughlin serves on Anderson’s advisory committee and provides technical and educational support when needed.

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Students and faculty at Northern Maine Community College and the Caribou Regional Applied Technology Center came together at NMCC recently for the SkillsUSA competition.

Participating were (front row, left to right) Alex Purvis of Limestone (NMCC), Joshua Kelly of Limestone, Noah Tounzen of Limestone, and Walter Burlock of Van Buren.

Also taking part were (middle row, same order) NMCC Instructor Joseph McLaughlin, Mark Cyr of Caribou (NMCC), CRATC Computer Servicing Instructor Lisa Anderson, Gerald Belanger of Caribou, and Peter Deschaine of Presque Isle.

In back are (left to right) Travis Dewitt of Fort Fairfield (NMCC), Jeff Thuo of Limestone (NMCC), Doug Ewing of Caribou, Matthew Belanger of Caribou, Marcus Bowers of Presque Isle, Scott Rossignol of Caribou, and Stephen Melbourne of Caribou.



Doug Ewing of Caribou receives the first place certificate for this year's local SkillsUSA competition held recently at Northern Maine Community College. Presenting the award to Ewing is Lisa Anderson, electronics/computer servicing instructor at the Caribou Regional Applied Technology Center.