



# News Release

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## For Presque Isle couple NMCC commencement is a family affair

*Aroostook County* - The coming weeks will bring a number of firsts for Kenny and Amanda LeTourneau of Presque Isle. On Saturday, May 16, the husband and wife will each receive their first college degrees – doing so together as members of the Class of 2009 at Northern Maine Community College in Presque Isle. Then there's landing the first job after College, where they'll put their degrees to work. And in early June, the LeTourneau's will welcome their first son, who they plan to name Kaleb.

As they prepare for the coming changes, the couple is looking forward with anticipation to what lies ahead, and with great appreciation for a campus community that has been part of their family all along. In fact, since the LeTourneau's first enrolled at NMCC they've married, welcomed their youngest daughter, Emilie, age two, (who joins her sister, Mackenzie, age four) into the world and prepared for their family to grow yet again.

Although going to College together has sometimes made things easier, that has not always been the case. "Our first semester, we took a lot of our general education classes together, which made it easier for traveling, since we commuted from Ashland at that time. Since then, we have had totally different schedules and routines, which can mean a lot of juggling with the kids," said Amanda.

Time management has been especially important for both Amanda and Kenny. As a nursing and precision metals manufacturing student respectively, the couple had to not only juggle the parenting of two young children and the work that goes along with being college students, but work extra hard to succeed in two intense educational programs, both of which demand a great deal of those enrolled.

"Academically, we helped each other with some of the general education core classes, but, overall, our programs are so separated from each other it's hard to lend a hand. Nursing and the trades are so far removed from each other, in course work and even in their physical locations on campus; but as far as supporting each other emotionally – we definitely did," said Kenny.

The emotional support that Kenny and Amanda extend to each other has been so strong that it saw the couple through Kenny's 14-month deployment to Iraq that extended from January 2006 to March 2007. It was a difficult time, but one that only made the couple all the more determined to work toward their goals.

"It's been very challenging. I withdrew for a while due to medical reasons when I was pregnant with Emilie and had to wait until the fall after she was born to return to classes. With small children at home and Kenny deployed during part of that time, mixed with tough classes, it was really difficult – but I have always wanted to be a nurse, so no matter how hard it got, I knew I wouldn't give up," said Amanda. "Although our course work is very different, Kenny has helped me a lot, encouraging me and making me feel better when things got tough."

For his part, Kenny was less certain when entering the college what path his life would take. He was originally interested in entering an engineering program, but, as often happens, life happens and plans change. "I wasn't sure what major I wanted when I first came to NMCC, so I tried some different things," said Kenny.

After trying a few courses, he settled into the precision metals manufacturing program, but upon his return from Iraq found himself out of sequence in the program. Rather than take a semester off from school, he started in the computer-aided drafting program and went back to finish in precision metals. He will graduate with both an associate in applied science degree in precision metal manufacturing and a certificate in computer-aided drafting.

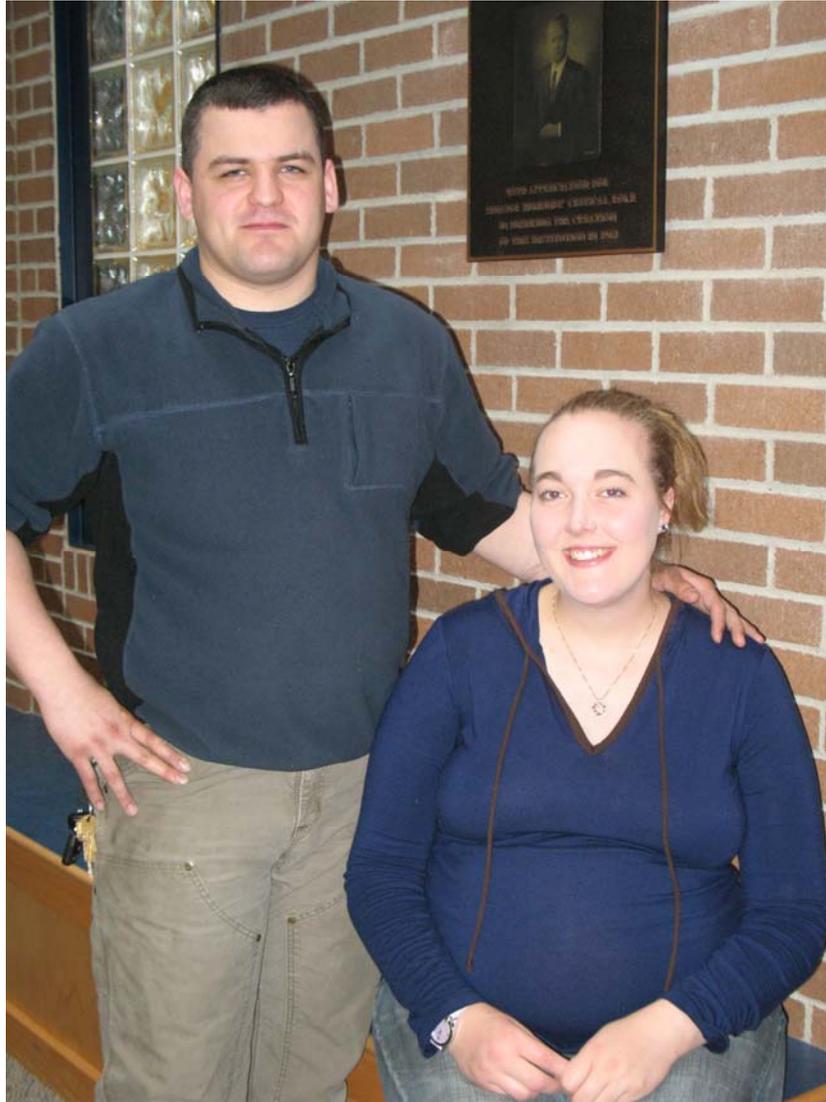
"Precision metals and computer-aided drafting really has a lot of the same elements that I liked about engineering – design, construction and application," said Kenny. "I'm glad that it worked like it did, because I ended up being in one of the best programs in the state. And now that I'm done, I'm excited and ready to go to work."

Although graduation from college will mark a significant milestone for both Kenny and Amanda, the LeTourneau's have not planned a large-scale celebration to mark the occasion. Rather, the couple plans to spend time after the ceremony as a family relaxing and enjoying time spent together with no papers due, tests to study for or classes to rush off to.

"It has been hard, especially for the kids, because they are too young to understand why their mom and dad have to do homework and study. But I think that us coming to school sets them up to do what they want to do. It shows them that there are no barriers. Stick with it, and you can do whatever you want to do," said Amanda.

Young Mackenzie and Emilie will get to share in their parent's success and experience firsthand that hard work does pay off, when they join with Amanda's mom in pinning her during the annual NMCC Nursing Pinning Ceremony, which happens on the afternoon of May 15, the day before commencement. The pinning ceremony signifies the nurses' official entry into the profession.

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*Husband and wife Kenny and Amanda LeTourneau of Presque Isle will graduate together as members of the Northern Maine Community College Class of 2009 on May 16.*