



News Release

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NMCC prepares for July 17 opening and dedication of new Peter G. Hunt, Sr. Multi-Media Center

Aroostook County - A transformation of the largest classroom at Northern Maine Community College into a state of the art multi-media videoconferencing facility is nearing completion, and the campus is preparing for the center's July 17 grand opening and dedication.

Funded through a \$101,161 grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the former Christie Lecture Hall will be re-opened with an attractive new look and, more importantly, a new purpose – to support the growth of distance education and the College's mission to serve the educational needs of northern Maine. Over the past several months the facility has undergone a significant renovation, including the installation of videoconferencing and related technology.

At the top of the list of courses to be delivered and received in the enhanced lecture hall are offerings in the associate degree nursing program. The College has outgrown the existing classroom space currently used to both teach and transmit its nursing courses to distant sites in Houlton and Calais, and for the first time this coming fall, to the St. John Valley. The space was not originally designed to incorporate distance learning technology, making future expansion difficult with the limited resources and physical space available.

“The renovation of the lecture hall and transformation of the facility into a ‘smart’ classroom will not only help us better meet existing demand in the region for our nursing curriculum, but will allow for expansion in other course and program offerings in allied health and sciences, as well as other academic and career training programs,” said NMCC President Timothy Crowley. “This will be the case for classes originating from NMCC that will be transmitted to distant sites, such as nursing, as well as for offerings being taught at other facilities across Maine that we will be able to receive. Ultimately the new technology will allow us to offer courses and programs to students that are needed in this region moving forward.”

In addition to serving students enrolled in allied health programs at NMCC, the enhanced lecture hall with distance learning technology will be available to local hospitals and other healthcare facilities throughout Aroostook County. Other academic programs at the College, including offerings coordinated through the continuing education division which are designed to enhance County workforce development, will also benefit from the facility.

The potential for the new multi-media classroom to enhance regional economic development activity has led college officials to name the facility after a well-known and highly respected County business and community leader who passed away unexpectedly two years ago. Peter G. Hunt Sr. was one of the founders of the statewide United Insurance Group (UIG) and established and successfully operated a number of businesses in The County and beyond, including acquiring, in recent years, the Harry's family of businesses comprised of Top of Maine Insurance Co., Harry's Honda and Harry's Motor Sports in Presque Isle. He passed away on June 28, 2007 at the age of 63.

“Peter's life work was centered on creating opportunity for people to live, work and do business in Northern Maine – and he did it with a tremendous passion and determination,” said Crowley of Hunt, a man he came to know well through the College Foundation Board on which the businessman served. “As a Foundation board member, Peter always kept opportunities for County residents at the forefront of his work with the College – naming this impressive facility after him is truly a fitting legacy to a champion of both higher education and The County.”

In addition to his role as a founder of UIG, Hunt served as chairman and CEO of the collaborative group of Maine independent insurance agencies until his retirement from that post in 1995. Afterwards, he formed U.V., Inc., a commercial insurance agency. He also consulted with many insurance companies and agencies within the Maine marketplace.

Aside from his involvement with the NMCC Foundation board, Hunt was active in several other community and civic organizations, among them the Patriot Mutual Education Foundation Investors Council, Aroostook Partnership for Progress, Community General Hospital in Fort Fairfield, Fort Fairfield Housing Authority and the Fort Fairfield Community Development Board.

The just over \$100,000 in funding for the enhancement of the 1,170 square foot facility that will be named after Hunt was championed by U.S. Senators Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins and Congressman Michael Michaud.

“I was pleased to support this effort to enhance allied health education and training at Northern Maine Community College,” said Senator Collins. “Like many other states, Maine faces a nursing shortage of critical proportions. I am hopeful that the enhanced facility will help address that need and allow even more students to follow their dreams of a career in medicine in Aroostook County.”

“By providing students with these resources, we are giving them the tools they need to advance in the future and expanding the opportunities available to them,” said Senator Snowe.

The official opening and dedication ceremony for the Peter G. Hunt, Sr. Multi-Media Center will take place on Friday, July 17, at 3:30 p.m. in the lobby of the Christie Building. Tours of the new facility will be provided and refreshments served. The public is invited and encouraged to attend the event.

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Finishing touches are being made to the new multi-media center on the Northern Maine Community College campus. The facility, which will be officially opened and dedicated during a ceremony at the College on Friday, July 17, will be named in memory of prominent Aroostook County businessman Peter G. Hunt, Sr. NMCC information technology department employee Shawn Lahey is seen here installing videoconferencing equipment that will be used to broadcast classes and meetings held in the facility to distant sites in The County, state and beyond.



The new multi-media center at Northern Maine Community College will be named after late Aroostook County businessman Peter G. Hunt Sr.