



# News Release

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## Louisiana Pacific employees benefit from NMCC program funded through state

**Aroostook County** - A dozen employees of Louisiana Pacific Corporation's New Limerick plant are in-line to earn a certificate in industrial mechanical maintenance through a special program developed by Northern Maine Community College and funded by the State of Maine Departments of Labor and Economic and Community Development.

The project, which began in the fall of 2007 and will wrap up next spring, has allowed the mill workers in southern Aroostook County to take courses that have been offered on-site at the LP facility, locally at the Houlton Higher Education Center, and on-line. The grant provided for the cost of course related materials and equipment, as well as covered tuition expenses for the employees.

"From our perspective this has been a huge success," said Ryan Bushey, LP human resource manager. "It has allowed employees the opportunity to earn their degree while maintaining their ties to the company and completing their course work locally and even on-site. Moreover, classes are designed around elements here at LP that will help advance our company."

Courses offered under the program include predictive maintenance and troubleshooting, which were offered on-line, and industrial energy management techniques and welding, both of which were offered on-site at LP. Additionally, mill workers enrolled in the program, like 52-year-old Phil Chase of Houlton, have taken college-level English composition and applied mathematics courses.

A 27-year veteran LP millwright, Chase works in the maintenance department. He signed on for the program in the fall of 2007 with the intent of taking air conditioning and refrigeration as a technical elective before he completes the program in 2010.

"My initial goal was to take the program so that I could work on the air conditioning units at the plant," said Chase. "But, it's really opened my eyes. It's helped me tremendously by allowing me to take courses locally, and helped me generate good study habits and make wise use of my time. This program has given me the incentive to go back to school."

In fact, working toward his certificate in industrial mechanical maintenance has so motivated Chase that he has also enrolled in NMCC's associate degree automotive technology program. Now a full-time student, since being issued a temporary lay-off by LP in May as a result of the soft market conditions for building materials, he is working toward a goal that he always wanted to attain.

“Getting a college degree is something I’ve always had in the back of my mind. I always wished I would have taken more classes beyond high school. I figured I’d never have the opportunity,” said Chase. “My goal is to graduate from college with an associate’s degree. Too many people helped me get into this to walk away from it.”

Chase credits NMCC, LP and state and federal agencies for providing the opportunity to earn both a certificate and degree. Tuition costs toward his associate degree are currently being covered by Trade Adjustment Assistance or TAA funding. He credits his wife Charlene and his two sons, 16-year-old Timothy and 13-year-old Gavin, with providing the encouragement, support and help along the way.

“I’ve been doing homework alongside my sons. Timothy has even helped me along the way and tutored me through my math class. We’ve really come together as a family,” said Chase.

The NMCC student is in line to graduate from the College in May of 2011 with his associate degree in automotive technology. He expects to earn his certificate in industrial mechanical maintenance this coming spring.

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*Phil Chase (far left) of Houlton is one of the dozen Louisiana Pacific employees participating in a special program offered through Northern Maine Community College in southern Aroostook County. When completed next spring, the workers will each earn a certificate in industrial mechanical maintenance. The program is funded through the State of Maine Departments of Labor and Economic and Community Development. Photographed during a recent English composition course designed for the LP employees at the Houlton Higher Education Center are (left to right) Paul Deveau, Brad Lefay, Tony McCormick, Andy Leighton, instructor Ron Murray (standing), Keith Gallagher, and Kenton Warman.*



*LP employee Tony McCormick (left) works with one of his colleagues practicing welding techniques using a mobile welding lab set up on-site at LP in New Limerick. The equipment was purchased through grant funds provided by the State of Maine Departments of Labor and Economic and Community Development.*