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success stories

TAOS COUNTY AND THE MORENO VALLEY

Northern New Mexico College

No more pencils, no more books, no more teachers' dirty looks

By Sandy Penny

Everywhere you turn these days, someone is talking lifelong learning. The good news is that this does not have to be forced on us. Humans are naturally curious and love to learn, learning is exciting.

Northern New Mexico College (NNMC) inspires students by offering classes that are interesting, fun and affordable. Classes cost about 10 percent less than the statewide average. NNMC is growing its Continuing Education Department at a rapid rate in both Española and El Rito. Continuing Education is not necessarily about passing or failing or earning a degree, it's about the joy of learning. Classes can enhance your self-esteem as you learn new skills, get better at your job, and possibly earn more money while you add value to your resume. Ultimately, it keeps life interesting.

The great thing about Continuing Education classes is that they can evolve in direct response to what people want to learn as they address specific community needs. You don't have to consent to getting a degree to expose yourself to fascinating new subjects. In fact, taking an introductory class may be the best way to explore whether you want to go deeper into a subject.

Continuing Education and lifelong learning

Continuing Education (CE) programs began as a way for learners in ever-changing fields to keep up with industry changes. In many fields, a required number of CE hours are needed to keep your industry license. Continuing Education has also evolved into the concept of "lifelong learning" featuring courses that promote personal or career growth.

Non-credit classes include arts, crafts, dance, food, health, home, garden, language, music and writing. You can learn simply for the joy of learning.

Northern New Mexico College offers classes for all ages. There are summer classes for children as well as classes with students age 50 and up into their 80s. There's even a cultural program called Summer Hand for elders who want a social and educational environment in which to share and thrive. The college hopes one day someone who is over 100 will register for classes.

Techie wannabes

For those who want to get up to speed on computer skills, NNMC offers basic computer courses such as Word, Excel and Access. You can also learn basic Web Site design, videography and podcasting skills that help you better use your own computer. Even if you don't have a computer, you can learn at NNMC's well-equipped computer labs. There's new digital video technology called the Red Camera, and NNMC is launching a program



The El Rito Geology Class inspires the rock formations along up the world's most volcanoes.

to train videographers in this more economical way of producing high-quality motion pictures. For still photographers, NNMC offers a great hands-on lab with classes taught by experts in the field.

Yummy choices

If you love cooking, NNMC's Española campus offers a commercial kitchen in which to take classes on easy regional cuisine and catering and freezing methods. You can learn how to make pottery, jewelry and ceramics. How about exploring local culture, geography, geology, and archeology? You can even take a class to become a river-crafting guide, learn about area petroglyphs or take martial arts or yoga. The list is almost endless and changing all the time.

Taking it on the road

Experiential learning through travel offers direct experience of

locations, cultures and languages. Students learn by doing. NNMC is currently developing educational tours for those who want to travel and learn. New Mexico has a rich history and culture with many opportunities for educational adventures.

Director of Public Information for NNMC, Thomas Alvarez recently took the El Rito geology class. He recounts the positive experience: "Since coming to New Mexico nearly two years ago I have become profoundly aware of the diverse landscape. My curiosity kept growing about how and where adventures. The 2008 program runs from June 9 through June 23, 8 a.m. to noon daily. It costs only \$120 and includes breakfast and lunch.

There is also a Youth Arts Camp from June 9 through June 20 for grades 5-8 for \$120. Classes include theater and dance, indoor and outdoor activities and a final performance on June 20. Dances include ballet, modern, hip-hop, break dancing and Salsoriko. Visit our Web site at www.nnmc.edu, click on Community, then click on Continuing Education for a complete listing of classes. Or call Matt Pamphrey, director Continuing Education, 565-747-2119, email: ce@nnmc.edu.

What is it that you always wanted to learn? Go ahead, sign up for a class. Chances are that NNMC offers it. It's easy, it's fun and it keeps you young.

ask. It was great fun and gave me more understanding of New Mexico and the development of the planet. More on-location classes like this are planned that offer the history, culture and landscape of notable locations among the many noteworthy communities in Northern New Mexico.



Kids College offers summer programs for children. Kids College, for ages 3 to 9, is a way to instill a love of learning in youngsters and acquaint them with the college environment.

This very popular program includes arts, crafts, puppet making and nature adventures. The 2008 program runs from June 9 through July 25, 8 a.m. to noon daily. It costs only \$120 and includes breakfast and lunch.

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 921 Paseo de Oñate, Española
 (505) 747-2111
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