

## **Nordic assistance leads to big investment in forest industry**

Nordic leads economic development in the region through successful partnerships with communities, businesses and organizations in the region. Assistance provided with research, funding proposals and human resources has proven to be a tremendous help in maintaining and diversifying the forest industry on the Great Northern Peninsula. The Northern Peninsula Forest Resources Association, in partnership with Nordic Economic Development Corporation, secured 1.1 Million in funding from ACOA under CAF to establish a regional wood inventory yard for the Great Northern Peninsula.

Nordic administers and provides the day-to-day direction along with its management team in the development of the wood yard. This development will support the new pellet plant being constructed in Roddickton-Bide Arm due to begin operations in the fall of 2010.

The development of the required infrastructure provides the venue in which energy wood is stored and will eventually be drawn from to provide the required wood fuel energy biomass needed for the production of pellets. To date land development has been ongoing, an inventory control system has been designed and construction crews are installing the fencing around the perimeter of the wood yard with the construction of a gatehouse to begin over the next few days.

Nordic has been working to ensure that economic opportunities are moving forward and that the region as a whole benefits. The recent investment will also benefit approximately 20 local businesses that employ 150 people in the forest industry on the Northern Peninsula. The development which is essential to the success of the pellet plant will stabilize the 300 direct and indirect jobs associated with the forest industry and will also encourage new direct and indirect employment in the range of 100 jobs on the Northern Peninsula.

“I would like to thank Nordic Economic Development Corporation, without whom, I highly doubt, we would have not secured the funding we needed. They have played an instrumental role in this initiative,” stated Dean Pilgrim, President, Northern Peninsula Forest Resources Association. “Nordic has been working diligently over the past year in ensuring that this development would happen, as they have seen first-hand the effects in the region with the loss of the industry on the Peninsula. We have to commend the staff and volunteer board members who have spent their valuable time in meetings and negotiations which shows their level of dedication and commitment to the forest industry on the Northern Peninsula.”

This development comes with a strong management team with respect to the role of the NPFRA, Nordic, ACOA, private sector enterprises, and supported by the Department of Natural Resources. This is important to ensure the success of the project for the region. The successful development of a Regional Wood Inventory Yard is integral to the success of the proposed wood pellet plant and to sustain the commercial harvesting sector on the Northern Peninsula.

“We strive on good partnerships that will help grow and diversify the economy of our region. Good initiatives like this one help us realize that opportunities exist, but we need to work together to ensure they become more than an opportunity,” noted Linda Randell, Executive Director, Nordic Economic Development Corporation. “I would like to thank our funding partners for working with us to ensure identified opportunities become successful initiatives that benefit the people of the region.

The development will retain skilled people in the area and also encourage higher paying valued added processing jobs in the region. It will also support the existing industry base and establish a new industry in the province with export potential.

“As the forest industry continues to face challenges world-wide we need key initiatives like this to allow our communities to remain viable with workers that maintain their skills and their employment so they can continue living here with their families,” added Mr. Pilgrim.

There are environmental benefits for the region and the province with respect to clean energy and it aligns well with federal government strategies toward better biomass utilization and clean energy. It also presents an opportunity to reclaim biomass residue that would otherwise continue to pile up and create significant environmental issues. It can also be viewed as carbon neutral energy that ties into the federal and provincial government climate change strategies.

Nordic continues to build strong partnerships within various industries throughout the region. Their list of partnerships include, but not limited to, towns, organizations, industry associations, businesses, chambers of commerce and various other groups to ensure that they continue to lead economic development in this region.