

## **FINAL DATE OF GREAT NORTHERN PENINSULA FISHERIES TASK FORCE**

The Great Northern Peninsula Fisheries Task Force today announced the release of its final report on the fishing industry of the Great Northern Peninsula. The report covers all aspects of the regional fishery and makes 44 recommendations to help address the many challenges which continue to impact the ongoing performance of the Great Northern Peninsula fisheries sector and its regional economy.

Cyril Taylor, Chair of the Nordic Economic Development Corporation, says, "This report is the culmination of a lot of work by a lot of people. We are encouraged by the insightfulness of the recommendations and we are hoping the report will form a framework around which the fishing industry in this region can start to recover." Mr. Taylor adds that, "The fishing industry is the backbone of this area's economy and while we all must strive to diversify into other sectors it is vital that we have a strong fishing sector." Mr. Taylor says he is especially pleased to see the Task Force's support of regional or community based quotas as a tool for community economic development. "This is a concept that Nordic has promoted since 1997 and we are pleased to see it included in the Task Force's recommendations", notes Mr. Taylor.

Vachon Noel, chair of the Red Ochre Regional Board, noted, "At the 2002 Economic and Employment Summit community leaders from around the Great Northern Peninsula were challenged by the political leaders of the day to unite and bring forward suggestions to both levels of government on how to improve our ailing fishing industry. This report does just that. If the federal and provincial governments, the Regional Economic Development Boards and other industry stakeholders act upon these 44 recommendations, the prospects for a vibrant fishing industry on the Great Northern Peninsula will be greatly improved. Furthermore, recommendation 1.2, increasing independent science research, is consistent with the direction that the Board was promoting for Memorial University's Marine Biology Station in Norris Point. Separately and together, these 44 recommendations, when implemented, will have the ability to rebuild the fishing based economy of our rural communities."

The GNP Fisheries Task Force was formally established in late 2004 and had its origins in the 2002 Northern Peninsula Economic and Employment Summit. One of the principal conclusions arising from this summit was that community and industry stakeholders needed to be more proactive and unite to find solutions that continue to challenge the region's fishery. The Task Force was a joint partnership initiative of the Nordic Economic Development Corporation and the Red Ochre Regional Board, the region's two regional economic development boards. The Task Force membership was comprised of a broad cross section of industry representatives.

Both board chairs agree that the Task Force Report can be used as one element of a comprehensive regional economic development framework to help address economic development challenges on the Great Northern Peninsula. Over the coming months both boards will be actively following up with both levels of government on the implementation of the report's recommendations. Funding for this initiative was made available by Service Canada's Industrial Adjustment Services program.