



## *Workforce Expansion & the Labour Supply Challenge*

### **Atlantica Centre for Energy releases Discussion Paper**

**Saint John, September 22, 2008**

The Atlantica Centre for Energy released today its most recent discussion paper - *Workforce Expansion & the Labour Supply Challenge*. The purpose of the discussion paper is to promote wider and broader awareness of the need to expand the availability of skilled labour in order to construct the proposed major Energy Hub projects.

Tim Curry, President for the Atlantica Centre for Energy, stated “With our diverse mix of energy related assets, our region is in the enviable and unique position to profoundly change its economy, its society and its future by serving as the Energy Hub of the International Northeast; however in order for our region to realize the full potential of the opportunity, we need to understand and urgently address the projected scarcity of skilled labour.”

The paper draws attention to the region’s diverse energy portfolio that includes thermal, hydroelectric and nuclear power, as well as the region’s refining facilities and Canada’s first to market LNG terminal. It also highlights the unprecedented opportunity for further investment in the region’s energy cluster with Irving Oil’s proposed second refinery “Eider Rock” and the potential for a second nuclear reactor at Point Lepreau.

The purpose of the paper is to provide the reader with a brief synopsis of the magnitude of the opportunity at hand while, at the same time to build awareness that unless project proponents, governments and the community begin to take meaningful action now, the labour supply challenge is potentially a crisis “on our doorstep” that could detrimentally affect the major Energy Hub projects.

“Atlantic Canada and our region are now full participants in the global competition for skilled labour”, stated Curry. The Centre’s discussion paper identifies seven approaches to mitigating the pending shortages in skilled labour. The Centre’s paper emphasizes that a vigorous workforce expansion program will need to have various components. A comprehensive strategy is required that substantially trains significantly more New Brunswickers in our community colleges, a larger and more effective apprenticeship program; re-training workers who are exiting declining industries; attracting non-traditional members of the workforce, including women and Aboriginal groups; retaining our existing skilled workers and attracting repatriate workers; and revisiting the province’s recent amendments to the Industrial Relations Act that limit the opportunity for construction companies (particularly small to medium sized local contractors) to operate as both union and non-union entities – often referred to as “double breasting legislation.”

The paper suggests that although there is a vital need to increase the numbers currently being trained, the objective must be to train to sustainable numbers. The Centre suggests that other strategies are also required to meet the projected peak demand periods. In addition to the provinces repatriation strategies, a suite of initiatives to attract the domestic mobile workforce and temporary foreign workers are needed to meet peak demand areas during construction phases.

“There is a heightened awareness by many stakeholders evolving from the Benefits Blueprint process,” added Curry. “The Benefits Blueprint document was clear that without the required strategic investments that address the needs of workforce expansion, the viability of the proposed Energy Hub projects may be put at risk. The intent of the paper that we are sharing today is to ensure that we maintain the focus on this critical challenge and take the actions today to ensure we have the required workers when we need them,” concluded Curry.

### *About us*

The Atlantica Centre for Energy is an industry association promoting the sustainable growth of the region’s energy sector. We work collaboratively with energy companies and communities to encourage broad based community engagement on issues affecting the energy sector and its host communities.

-30-

For Further Information:

**John Herron** | Director, Communications & Business Development

Direct: (506) 674-9439 | Cell: (506) 650-1372 | Home: (506) 832-0116 | [john.herron@atlanticaenergy.org](mailto:john.herron@atlanticaenergy.org)

**Atlantica Centre for Energy** | [www.atlanticaenergy.org](http://www.atlanticaenergy.org)

