

709 NEWS

P.O. Box 2220, Suite 100

Tel : 576-NEWS (6397)

Fax: 709-753-7340

Website: www.bristolgroup.ca

139 Water Street, St. John's NL, A1C 6E6

Toll Free Tel: 1-888-709-NEWS (6397)

Toll Free Fax : 1-877-709-NEWS (6397)

E-mail: 709NEWS@bristolgroup.ca

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Another step taken

NLRC chooses technology for Placentia Bay refinery

KIRK SQUIRES

The Newfoundland and Labrador Refining Corporation (NLRC) has entered into technology licensing and engineering agreements for the major refinery process units.

The 300,000-barrel a day refinery will feature a range of UOP (a Honeywell company) technologies to produce low-sulfur, high quality clean fuels.

The company has also entered into a technology licensing and technical services agreement with ConocoPhillips for the ThruPlus™ Coking Process technology.

Why put those agreements in place now while still awaiting final environmental approval?

"It is important to select technology because that technology is then incorporated into more detailed design and engineering," explains Roland Butler, NLRC's vice president for community and environmental affairs.

Butler says to use these technologies NLRC has to enter into

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NLRC chooses technology for refinery

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licensing agreements. The company determined this would be the right thing to do at this time.

"These are some of the bigger companies that offer this sort of technology," says Butler.

"UOP is well known for its hydrocracker technology; they are owned by Honeywell which is a larger engineering services company.

"ConocoPhillips has quite a bit of experience in refining and have developed technologies which they have licensed relating to the coker.

"All of these things require some investment of time and money but the important part is you have access to the technology and the engineering services that go along with it," says Butler.

"Again that becomes part of the engineering design for the refinery."

Progress

In November NLRC inked an agreement with Japan's IJK to fabricate and deliver several heavy-walled vessels related to the refinery's process units. The components have been identified as long lead-time items.

Now the company has chosen the refining technology for the new facility.

"These are all signs of progress and each represents a step," says Butler, adding, "It is important to see these things put in place.

"The companies we are signing these agreements with . . . are reputable, well established companies that people in the refining industry know and acknowledge as experts."

Butler would not reveal any details on the cost of these agreements.

"I have said from the beginning when we began public consultations we want to be as open as possible with informa-

tion, except when it comes to sensitive business information.

"We are not the only ones thinking about building a refinery and there is a competitive situation. These agreements are with other companies so we want to . . . keep that confidential."

Labour

The week before Christmas the Resource Development

Council, on behalf of its member construction unions, and the NLR Employers' Association signed a labour agreement.

The memorandum of settlement concludes negotiations of a collective agreement for the construction of the new refinery.

At the peak of construction, likely in 2010, the workforce will be around 3,000.

Butler could not discuss specifics of the agreement other than to say it is thorough and comprehensive.

He says this is another important step for the project.

"When you talk to people about your project . . . the question of labour often comes up. Across Canada the U.S. labour issues are a big question mark when it comes to very large projects."

The two parties will also jointly approach government to obtain the special project declaration.

"What that will help bring to the project is labour stability through project construction period. That is important as well because the construction period is going to be at least three years and you want to be sure you can start and finish in that timeline."

The company does not anticipate any problems with attracting that size of workforce.

"We are becoming more comfortable there should be a workforce available for the construction period."

The company continues to do presentations and talk to students in both high schools and the college system in the province.

"We have been doing that for a long time now," says Butler.

"We see the importance of speaking to young people both in high school and the college system to let them know about this project so they can educate themselves and consider it as part of their career planning, not only as part of this project but for other energy related projects," he says.

"When you look at the time frame we are working in, a young person can plan a career, chose a program and . . . come out to match the timing of proposed development. We have to think ahead; we encourage young people to learn about the refinery and give it some serious thought."

The comprehensive report from Transport Canada is now open for public comment until January 24. That is the federal study of the marine terminal.

For more information on the proposed refinery and current development visit www.nlrefining.com.

ksquires@thepacket.ca