

Tidal turbine companies from France to visit Digby

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DIGBY - Two companies from France are coming to Digby to see for themselves why this is the Nova Scotia port of choice for servicing tidal energy devices.

Terry Thibodeau, the renewable energy co-ordinator with the Municipality of the District of Digby, told the Courier by phone at the end of the International Conference on Ocean Energy (ICOE) in Halifax, that he is still working out all the details for the visit.

“They want to get the lay of the land, both literally and figuratively too as regards where things are and, how government interactions work,” said Thibodeau. “It’s going to be a full full day.”

Denis Trottier, a trade commissioner with the Canadian Embassy in France will be escorting three businessmen from HydroQuest and Construction Mecanique de Normandie (CMN) when they visit Digby Nov. 7.

[HydroQuest](#) is a hydrokinetic turbine manufacturer and installer and [CMN](#) is a shipyard employing 400 people in Cherbourg, France on the English Channel. The two companies are part of a [partnership working on a pilot tidal energy farm](#) near Cherbourg.

That farm will have 10 tidal turbines capable of producing 1.3 MW each.

The two companies also have a partnership agreement to develop tidal turbine farms internationally.

Jean-Francois Simon, the chief executive officer of HydroQuest, Guillaume Gréau, head of business development in marine renewable energies at CMN and Jean-Paul Aubert, commercial manager at CMN will be spending the day in the Digby area.

Thibodeau says he wants to take the visitors to see the Fundy Tidal sites in the Petit and Grand Passages between Digby Neck, Long Island and Brier Island.

“Even a quick trip on the ferry will show them how strong these currents are and what they have to contend with if they’re putting a turbine in the water here,” he said.

Thibodeau also wants to organize a tour of [A.F. Theriault's](#) in Meteghan River so they understand the boat builder’s capabilities and he hopes to be able to squeeze in visits to other marine service and machine shops and perhaps a sit-down meeting with local municipal leaders as well.

The idea for the visit came from meetings last October when a French delegation visited Nova Scotia – Thibodeau hosted one company already last week in advance of the ICOE.

And then at meetings in Halifax this week, he arranged to host tomorrow’s visitors.

Thibodeau says the members of the Digby - Clare contingent at the ICOE are going to have sit down soon and share information from the conference.

“We were working in three different teams, so while we were talking to one company or organization over here, another Digby group was talking to someone else over there,” he said. “We’ve all been focused on gathering information about what tidal companies want and need if they were to set up shop in Digby.

“But now we have to compile everything we heard and learned — and this visit tomorrow, is for me, all about that as well, we have to compile that info, and figure out where we go from here, what’s our best game plan to position ourselves to accommodate these companies here in Digby County.”

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