

MARINE INSTITUTE TRAINS DND PERSONNEL AT SERT CENTRE

Member of Parliament Gerald Keddy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Honourable Peter MacKay, Minister of National Defence and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) and the Honourable Joan Burke, Minister of Education on behalf of the Honourable Trevor Taylor, Minister of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development, announced an investment of \$473,250 to build capacity at the SERT Centre in Stephenville to facilitate military training in the town.

On September 17, the SERT Centre welcomed the first group of trainees. Twenty young men and women from all over Canada converged on the centre to complete a thirty-week program consisting of the Marine Institute's basic firefighting modules with the addition of the Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting (ARFF) program. This program was customized to meet the needs of the DND.

The centre will create five full-time positions, including three program instructors and two technical assistants. One class of 20 firefighting trainees is already studying at the facility and at least 20 more will be trained during 2007-08.

ACOA funding of \$315,500 was provided for this project for program-related equipment through its Innovative Communities Fund (ICF) which focuses on investments that lead to long-term employment and economic capacity building in rural communities. Government of Newfoundland and Labrador funding of \$157,750 will be provided through the provincial Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development.

The SERT Centre also received \$400,000 from the Department of Education, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, for the on-going operations and the future growth of the centre.

"The Provincial Government is extremely proud of the reputation the Marine Institute enjoys internationally and we will continue to invest to see this reputation expand," said Minister Burke. "The SERT Centre is an important facility that contributes significantly to the economy of the west coast and we look forward to seeing its continued growth in the area of emergency response training."

The Centre expects to train 60 DND firefighting trainees during 2007-08.