



NEWS RELEASE

Date: February 7, 2003
Subject: **Marine Institute and Stephenville Airport Corporation Launch Safety and Emergency Response Training Centre**

STEPHENVILLE — Providing a world-class safety and emergency response training centre in western Newfoundland became a reality today for the Marine Institute and the Stephenville Airport Corporation with the announcement of funding for the initiative from ACOA.

Today's announcement by Mr. Bill Matthews, M.P., Burin – St. Georges, will allow the partners to move forward with establishing the Safety and Emergency Response Training Centre (SERT Centre) to meet the growing demand for such specialized training in the fish harvesting, aviation, marine, industrial and oil and gas sectors within Newfoundland and Labrador as well as Atlantic Canada. The \$1,040,921 provided by ACOA will be used to develop personnel, product and physical infrastructure related to startup of the Centre, which is expected to begin operating by the fall of 2003. A limited number of training courses may be offered as early as this June.

Leslie O'Reilly, executive director of the Marine Institute, sees the Centre as an opportunity for students and clients in western Newfoundland to have improved access to training. "This initiative, linked with the Marine Institute's capabilities in offshore safety and marine training and research, will showcase Newfoundland and Labrador as the leader in Safety and Emergency Response training for marine transportation, fisheries, oil and gas, industrial and aviation in the Atlantic Region. Additionally, the alliance is a further demonstration of Memorial University's commitment to build linkages that will strengthen rural and economic development in Newfoundland and Labrador."



“It is a tremendous step forward in the diversification of the Airport’s capabilities, showing its strengths and in contributing to economic development in the region,” says Paul Gallant, Chair of the Stephenville Airport Corporation.

The alliance will bring together the Marine Institute’s management, education and training capability with the Airport Corporation’s physical assets including a fire training field, fire training equipment, offices, and classroom space. The combination of these assets will bring a new capability to the region, enable re-activation of the aviation fire training facility and strengthen the safety and emergency response training capability provincially and regionally.

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For further information contact:

Mr. Paul Gallant
Chair
Board of Directors
Stephenville Airport Corporation
709-643-8455

Mr. Leslie O’Reilly
Executive Director
Fisheries and Marine Institute of Memorial University
709-778-0463



BACKGROUND

Safety and Emergency Response Training Centre (SERT Centre)

The Stephenville Airport Corporation and the Marine Institute of Memorial University of Newfoundland have been awarded financing through ACOA's Strategic Community Investment Fund (SCIF) Program to assist in the establishment of a Safety and Emergency Response Training Centre (SERT Centre) in Stephenville, Newfoundland. The mandate of the SERT Centre will be to create a Centre of Excellence in safety and emergency response training in western Newfoundland.

The SERT Centre concept formed out of emerging demands for safety and emergency response training for the fish harvesting and marine transportation sectors in western Newfoundland; the industrial and oil and gas sectors in the province and the aviation sector in Atlantic Canada. All of these sectors require safety and emergency response training, however each differs in terms of the governing regulations, volume, timing, and type of training needed. The programs offered at the SERT Centre will meet the demands of these training requirements and improve accessibility where, to date, access to such has been minimal.

The strengths of the Centre will be the combining of the Marine Institute's management, education and training capability with the Airport Corporation's physical assets including a fire training field, fire training equipment, offices, and classroom space. The partnership will enable the Institute's proven capability in safety and emergency response training to grow to western Newfoundland. The SERT Centre will work also collaboratively with the Fire Commissioners Office, local industry as well as regulating bodies to ensure timely, relevant and high quality safety and emergency response training. This will bring a new capability to the region, enable re-activation of the aviation fire training facility and strengthen the safety and emergency response training capability provincially and regionally.



Partners (*Contribution: \$260,230*)

Marine Institute

With nearly 40 years of education and training experience, the Fisheries and Marine Institute of Memorial University of Newfoundland (Marine Institute) is Canada's most comprehensive education, training, applied research and technology transfer resource in support of the international marine industries. The Marine Institute has a comprehensive suite of state-of-the-art safety, survival and simulation facilities available to deliver a full range of training.

The Marine Institute's expertise in safety and emergency response has evolved through its Offshore Safety and Survival Centre (OSSC), which has over 35 years experience in delivering marine safety and survival training programs. In particular, the OSSC represents an international capability in emergency response training and is recognized nationally and internationally for providing safety and survival training of the highest standards. All training programs are approved by Transport Canada and are recognized by international certification agencies. The OSSC is a founding member of the International Association for Sea Survival Training (IASST) and a member of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).

The OSSC serves industry, marine, and onshore fire fighting professionals through emergency training and response and the improvement of marine survival technology. Instructors at the Marine Institute are experienced both as educators and practitioners, and the educational experience is based on a balanced combination of practical and theoretical knowledge. As required, courses are tailored to the requirements of government, seafarers, offshore workers, marine and on land for brigades, refinery operators, and an air crew, as well to specific needs of industrial clients.

Stephenville Airport Corporation

Stephen Airport Corporation operates Stephenville Airport, providing a full range of services to the aviation industry. Located on Stephenville Airport property is a state-of-the-art fire-training field, built by Transport Canada in 1992 and turned over to the Stephenville Airport Corporation in 1997. Between 1992 and its closure in 1997 air crash training programs were delivered at the facility by Transport Canada personnel. However, in 1997 Transport Canada privatised most major airports and discontinued operation of the Stephenville centre. The result has been minimal use of the Stephenville training centre over the past several years. An environmental review has confirmed that land meets or exceeds environment regulatory requirements for Federal, Provincial and Municipal levels of government.

The fire field is widely believed to be one of the best in the country for air crash training. A key selling point is the facility's ability to use fuel fires, enabling realistic, smoke-filled fires. The field is located within a fenced, secured area to the far side of Stephenville Airport operations and covers approximately three acres of land. In summary, located on Stephenville Airport property are the following:

- Building suitable to house classrooms and administration offices;
- Fully equipped fire training field appropriate for air crash fire training, complete with
 - 4500 L gasoline tank and pumping system;
 - an underground catch basin;
 - three monitoring wells for environmental protection purposes.
- Crash response vehicles and related fire fighting equipment;
- 16x20' storage/utility shed complete with a crash unit recharge facility;
- 16x20' debriefing (mud-type) classroom.

PROJECT BENEFITS

Benefits to Newfoundland and Labrador:

- revenue generation through the registration of clients from within the Province as well as Atlantic Canada.
- enhancement of the Provincial capability in safety and emergency response training.
- increase in the profile of Newfoundland and Labrador in Atlantic Canada in the area of safety and emergency response training.
- access to specialized training in safety and emergency response for corporate clients and individuals in western Newfoundland
- up to \$1.6M contribution to economic development in Stephenville and area. Spin-off activity will be felt in areas such as travel, entertainment, printing, transportation, accommodations, food service and business services.

Benefits to the Town of Stephenville

- re-activation of a state-of-the-art aviation fire training facility.
- enhance ability to attract national and international students to the area;
- promote local economic development and sustainability of communities in and around the Stephenville area.
- economic impact and spin-off activity will be felt in areas such as restaurants and hotels as well as create full and part-time employment.

Benefits to Atlantic Canada

- provide access within Atlantic Canada, particularly to the aviation industry, to specialized safety, fire fighting and emergency response training;
- provide access to nationally and internationally accredited fire training programs;

- enhancement of the Atlantic Canadian capability in safety and emergency response training.

Benefits to the Student

- for western Newfoundland – local access to specialized safety and emergency response training.
- nationally, especially Atlantic Canada – access to recognized air crash fire fighting training and re-certification programs.
- students enrolled in programs will gain internationally accredited air crash and land based fire fighting certification;
- national and international students will gain access to well-designed and advanced programs in an area that is critical to the well-being of a large number of companies and individuals alike.

Benefits to Partners

- enable the Marine Institute to effectively respond to emerging demand for safety and emergency response training in rural Newfoundland.
- enhancement and development of the Institute’s core faculty and staff;
- enhancement of the Marine Institute’s profile as an international knowledge centre in the area of safety and emergency response training.
- increased student enrolment provincially and nationally.
- growth of Corporation’s capability and expertise in the area of safety and emergency response training, in particular air crash fire fighting training.
- availability of valuable professional development opportunities for employees.
- additional revenue to enhance local economic development, employment and company growth.



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