

The Gaspé **SPEC**



ESTABLISHED • MAY 1975

VOLUME 41 / NO 6 / FEBRUARY 11, 2015

Contract 400119680
\$1.30 (Tax included)

Gaspé's Chamber of Commerce supports Escale Gaspésie regarding tourist train

Gilles Gagné

GASPÉ: - The director general of Gaspé's Chamber of Commerce and Tourism, Olivier Nolleau, supports Escale Gaspésie's offer to get involved in the operation of the Amiral Tourist Train.

Mr. Nolleau says that the Gaspé Chamber of Commerce and Tourism (GCCT) doesn't have the means to invest in the train but can be a valuable ally through the network formed by its business members. The GCCT is also the organization in charge of tourist information in the Gaspé area.

"We can intervene and talk to the members of our network, which is very large. It's a local network but we're also in contact with Quebec's Federation of Chambers of Commerce which, despite what some people may say, has some power and can influence the government,"



Photo: G. Gagné

The Amiral travelling near Barachois last summer.

points out Mr. Nolleau.

For a while he feared that the Bay of Chaleur group interested in operating the freight train would sell it outside the region. He is reassured that the group intends to keep the Amiral.

"It's a diamond in the rough, which has only been used for two years. Currently, the tourist train is the only rail service we can get in the area (Gaspé and Percé). The

freight train doesn't serve this sector again. We have to start somewhere. Eventually, some freight will roll on our rails. Junex has obtained very interesting results with its Gaspé oil fields. If the quantities increase, they have two options, ships or trains. At the

present time they are using truck but trains are less costly," adds Mr. Nolleau.

The Gaspé Chamber of Commerce and Tourism operates with an annual budget of \$450,000 for its tourism and business duties. This budget includes overseeing the

Grand Gaspé tourism promotion and operating the area's tourist information centre, including paying the staff. They receive a grant of \$240,000 from the Town of Gaspé.

In Percé, Jean-Guy Poirier, owner of the Jardin de l'anse bed and breakfast and president of the Percé Rock Tourism Board, also supports Escale Gaspésie's intention to get involved in the tourist train operations.

"First we must avoid the bankruptcy of the Gaspésie Railway Society and find the money necessary for the tourist train and the recent project (of the Baie des Chaleurs business group). The government must also take its responsibilities and financially support the infrastructure repairs," says Mr.