



Photo: G. Gagné

*The train was seen from many locations between New Richmond and Matapedia, including this spot between Saint-Omer and Carleton.*

## Long train links New Richmond to Matapedia

— Gilles Gagné

NEW RICHMOND: - Arguably the longest train, to travel between Matapedia and Gaspé over the past decade, consisting of 34 cars carrying 25 sections of windmill towers, left New Richmond at noon on Saturday, April 25. The train arrived in Matapedia shortly after 5:30 p.m. It was a heavy train, weighing over 3,000 tons, including the tare weight of the flatcars with most sections weighing more or less 70 tons. This explains why it took more than five hours to travel the 70 miles between the departure and arrival points.

The 34 cars are bound for

Searsport, Maine, for a wind farm that will be constructed there. The windmill sections were made by Fabrication Delta of New Richmond.

Luc Lévesque, interim director general of the Gaspésie Railway Society, said that such a long train is an important step for the company, considering the difficulties it has had over the past year.

On April 9 the transporter's restructuring plan was approved. It is no longer the owner of the line between Gaspé and Matapedia, which is now owned by Transport-Québec.

"A train such as the one on April 25 proves that we can tackle major freight deliveries,

and the logistics involved. Our infrastructure needs repairs but the New Richmond - Matapedia line is reliable enough to support that kind of tonnage," he states.

The flatcars each measure 90 feet in length. With the couplers, they reach almost 95 feet. By adding the three locomotives, the train was over 3,500 feet in length. While several wood chip trains were long when the piles from the former Smurfit-Stone mill were shipped away in 2006, the weekend train was probably unmatched since 2003, when the three trains brought in the towers for Murdochville's first two wind farms, or even before.