



Photo: G. Gagné

First cement cars loaded in New Richmond

— Gilles Gagné

NEW RICHMOND – As of August 21, the Gaspésie Railway Society had loaded nine cement cars from McInnis Cement's plant in Port Daniel. Because the railway line is in a dormant state east of Caplan, the cars are loaded in New Richmond, at a facility built since the spring by the operator of the Matapedia-Gaspé line, the Gaspésie Railway Society. The line belongs to Quebec's Department of Transport. The first five cement cars were to be delivered to Canadian National in Matapedia for August 21. The destination is not revealed for now by McInnis Cement. "The loading process went well right from the start. We loaded the first car without problems. We made small adjustments here and there but it is a success," says Luc Lévesque, director general of the Gaspésie Railway Society.

The Gaspésie Railway Society and McInnis Cement have signed a five-year transport agreement to deliver 140,000 tons of cement to a customer or a group of customers. That is the equivalent of 300 carloads yearly, or six cars per week. With the addition of other customers, that volume could increase significantly. McInnis Cement is currently putting pressure on Quebec's Transport Ministry to open the line east of Caplan as soon as possible in order to load cement at its new Port Daniel plant. Another customer is putting pressure on Transports Québec, Gaspé-based LM Windpower. The company also has to load in New Richmond windmill blades made in Gaspé and bound for Texas. The company could save millions of dollars yearly in transportation costs by loading those blades in Gaspé. The next windmill blade train is scheduled to leave New Richmond on August 26.