



Photo: G. Gagné

*The type of car used to carry cement powder looks like a grain car. In the case of the New Richmond silo, it will be installed above the tracks instead of beside.*

## Gaspésie Railway Society awards silo contract to Fabrication Delta

— Gilles Gagné

NEW RICHMOND: – The Gaspésie Railway Society has awarded Fabrication Delta the contract to build a silo that would be used when shipping out some of McInnis Cement's output. Fabrication Delta is located next door to the Gaspésie Railway Society office.

Five bidders, including two Gaspesian companies, participated in the call for tenders issued in December. The deadline for that call for tenders was January 20 and the contract was awarded the following week after the Gaspésie Railway Society board meeting.

"The value of the silo contract amounts to \$211,500 plus taxes. The completion is scheduled for the end of April or the beginning of May.

The silo will be placed on our property, next to our New Richmond office, above the track located north of that office," explains Éric Dubé, president of the Gaspésie Railway Society.

The capacity of the silo will be 160 tonnes, slightly less than the capacity of two covered hoppers, the type of

car used to carry cement powder. The cement will be brought to New Richmond by truck from Port Daniel because the railway is dormant east of Caplan. The McInnis Cement five-year contract calls for the loading of 28,000 tonnes of cement annually, the equivalent of about 300 carloads.

Éric Dubé is confident that Transport-Québec, the owner of the railway, will announce relatively soon how much and how the government will spend the money that has been promised for track repairs in the Gaspé Peninsula.

"It remains to be seen what form that investment will take. I don't know what the government is planning. Chances are that some people might be disappointed. It is hard to please everybody.

Personally, I want some progress and we have to regain the use of the tracks east of New Richmond and Caplan," he says.

In January, Sébastien Proulx, the minister responsible for the Gaspé Peninsula, confirmed that an envelope of \$50 million was on the table for track upgrading.

The initial plan was to bring VIA Rail back to New Carlisle.

However, most economic stakeholders on the Gaspé Peninsula want to secure the freight service to the town of Gaspé first, considering the huge possibilities of generating revenues from customers located there, especially LM Wind Power.

They currently send their windmill blades to New Richmond by truck. They are then transferred to rail cars.

According to the study carried out in 2014 by consultant Canarail, it would cost \$86 million to secure the rail line for both passengers and freight between Matapédia and Gaspé for 25 years.

The replacement of the two bridges spanning over the Grand Caspédia river will be a necessity in the short to medium term because of its bearing capacity.

In the meantime, the Gaspésie Railway Society will handle its third windmill blade train between February 15, the expected arrival of the empty flat cars, and March 4, the scheduled date of departure of that train for Texas.