

## GEDC AGM 2017

### Session Notes:

*Mr. Mikko Koivisto, Woodland Manager, and Mr. Ryan Murphy, Forest Resource Manager, from Aditya Birla, AV Terrace Bay (AVTB) Mill opened by thanking GEDC for the communication and opportunity to talk about who they are, advancements made over the last five years and what they need help with. They gave an overview of employment statistics, production numbers, background of the mill, and wood sources. Currently there are 385 direct mill jobs and 375 direct woodlands jobs; and production at 330,000 ADMT per annum; ~5,000 m<sup>3</sup> or 100 truckloads per day. The mill was purchased in July 2012 with the intent to convert to Dissolving Grade (DG) production, however market status delayed the conversion and it is currently operated as a NKSK facility. Out of the 1,425,000 m<sup>3</sup> wood committed to AVTB, 835,000 m<sup>3</sup> comes from the Kenogami Forest. AVTB want to build communities that support the workforce they need to grow, and currently support numerous organizations and events in the Greenstone Region. At the end of their presentation they reviewed opportunities that organizations like GEDC can assist them with for example: spousal opportunities and appropriate properties; welcome packages of readily available information to help attract and retain skilled employees; and participation in Forest Tenure discussions. [www.avterracebay.ca](http://www.avterracebay.ca) April 2017 presentation*

*Mr. Marcel Pelletier, General Manager from Longlac Lumber Inc, Mill opened his talk with a brief background of himself and that Longlac Lumber Inc. was part of Buchanan. The mill has been open almost three years but had some wood supply issues. They started slow with one shift, and added a second in September bringing them to a total of 120 employees, and pending wood supply, plan to run at full capacity in June of this year. Their workforce is 20% down from what they need; 90% of the current workforce is First Nations including women. They are facing a shortage specifically with tradespeople; as a result they are working hard on their apprenticeship program. Despite the realization they may lose people in 3-4 years once they complete the program, they cannot let that stop them from proceeding. It was noted that many of the former tradespeople are working out of region / province in the mining sector which is hard to compete with. Contrary to rumours, there are plans to re-open the Nakina Mill once the Business Plan is finalized. It is important to operate this mill at lower costs as it is built and designed for the Ogoki forest; which makes it costly to ship wood in. The mill has been down since 2008 and hope to start-up slowly in a few months. They work with AV Terrace Bay to ensure that everything out of the forest is worked with for example; they would use the lumber and the by-product would go to AVTB. They are also facing issues with finding local contractors in business, with many being out of region / province. It was noted that the contractor / workforce is only at 75%.*

*Common themes with workforce and contractor shortages were noted for both mills where recruitment, attracting and retaining of people and their families to our area is proving difficult. It was a very interactive session with numerous questions and possible solutions being formulated including but not limited to: have clear readily available information for recruiters and interested parties, collaboration between key stakeholders, apprenticeship program awareness, youth strategy, available/accessible relevant trade education at a local level,*

*onsite/field visits to engage youth, enlist mentorship/coaching from retiring population to new recruits...*

*Mrs. Marla Michel, Northern Development Officer, Ministry of Northern Development and Mines; concluded the presentation portion of the day, highlighting forestry related programs and grants through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC). Two such programs are the Northern Business Opportunity Program and Small Business Start-up Projects. She stated that the number of applications received has increased, with GEDC being instrumental in helping clients through the application process by working with her and the client; she also works with local financial institutions. The Forestry sector is also facing challenges due to softwood lumber issues, generation gaps in family business, and missed generations in trades. With respect to the NOHFC programs it was noted that the “process” to apply and “steps” involved need to be smoothed out with role definition of each party (GEDC, Banks, NOHFC, and Client with Contract Company) in the process. We need to clearly and efficiently show how all the steps and partnerships fit together from the business plan stage, to financing, contract bidding vs letter of intents, NOHFC requirements etc. This process is not clear to people outside of the region trying to recruit forestry businesses for example. [April 2017 presentation](#)*