

Rigarus sends workers to Arctic

Chuck Kuepfer
Staff Reporter

When a job came up in Northern Canada working for the Canadian Coast Guard, employees at Rigarus Construction were eager to be one of two selected for the assignment.

In the end, Justin Pond and Rowan Wee Amour were sent by the Elmira-based company for a two-week trip performing maintenance service on remote telecommunication towers.

The Rigarus workers returned home from the trip earlier this month, which saw them fly to Killiniq Island, which is just off the northern tip of Labrador.

The island serves as the only land border between Nunavut Territory and Newfoundland and Labrador.

"We've never gone up there before," said Erin Campbell, a spokesperson for Rigarus, who looked after logistics for employees, including booking flights and hotels. "We do a lot of work for the Canadian Coast Guard, but this one was just extra special. A lot of guys wanted to be chosen to go."

Pond and Wee Amour were based on the Pierre Radisson and helicoptered to different remote sites to service telecommunication towers. The coast guard vessel, known as an Arctic Icebreaker, that provides escort operations in Canada's high north when summer weather allows it.

Even then, weather conditions can change plans in a hurry. The employees return trip home was delayed by a few days due to the weather.

"There was so much snow and ice that their boat got stuck, so different crews were chopping away at ice for almost 24 hours a day," said Campbell.

Pond heads up a crew that does most of the cabling work on telecommunication towers, which was what the recent project entailed. Wee Amour was chosen for the job because of his knowledge of the French language.

Rigarus has worked for the Canadian Coast Guard in the past, as well as companies such as Rogers and Bell, and for the Department of Defence.

Rigarus installs a number of types of communication towers, including self-supported towers, guyed towers,



Contributed photos

Elmira-based Rigarus Construction, a telecom and wind tower rigging company, recently sent workers to Killiniq Island to provide maintenance service for the Canadian Coast Guard.

monopoles or Met (meteorological) towers. The company operates in both the telecommunications and wind industries.

While there are other local companies that provide similar services, Campbell says that Rigarus is willing to go tackle jobs regardless of the location or environment.

"We are willing to travel everywhere," said Campbell, who noted they bid for jobs from BC to Nova Scotia. "We do serve the local community, but we're also willing to go wherever there's work."

That's also one of the perks of working for Rigarus, travelling across the country or beyond. The company pays for accommodations and meals.

Campbell says some employees came straight out of high school.

For them, it's like taking a year off, she says.

Even Campbell herself relishes

the opportunity to hit the road. She'll be heading to Vancouver this fall to represent the company at Canadian National Wind Energy Association's annual conference and trade show.

The company has expanded the scope of its work to include wind towers to complement its other business.

Rigarus, which operates under the motto No Such Thing as Can't, was incorporated in 2002 and is owned by Paul Panagapka, who has over two and a half decades of experience in the tower construction industry. The telecom and wind tower rigging company has 19 employees, but has room to grow.

"We're always looking for energetic people for sure," says Campbell. "As long as you're dedicated and willing to work, we'll give you a try. That's how you can prove yourself."

Region gets rapid transit funding

Chuck Kuepfer
Staff Reporter

A recent announcement has the local business community, as well as local politicians, buzzing.

Infrastructure money has been promised to help build a rapid transit system in Waterloo Region as part of the \$6.2 billion agreement through Building Canada, the government's long-term infrastructure plan.

The plan addresses the needs and priorities in Ontario through 2014 and includes a welcome commitment to establish a local public rapid transit system.

The Great Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber of Commerce says that, with the prospect of the region growing to 730,00 residents in 20 years, going ahead with effective transportation planning is imperative. The financial commitment, which the chamber describes as a major achievement for the region, could also make Waterloo Region an urban model for centres across the country.

"Today's announcement is the result of successful advocacy from across the region, including the business sector, local governments, and community organiza-

tions," stated Ross Wells, chair of the organization, in a press release.

Kitchener-Conestoga MP Harold Albrecht, who attended the funding announcement made in London last Thursday, also applauded the infrastructure announcement. He stated that bringing rapid transit to Waterloo Region has been a personal priority since taking office two and a half years ago.

"Since my election, I've worked with Waterloo Region officials and their staff, as well as my Ministerial colleagues to move this project forward and will I continue to work on behalf of the people of Waterloo Region to see it come to fruition," stated Albrecht in a press release.

The Building Canada infrastructure plan has prioritized clean drinking water, safer highways, expanded public transit and improved connectivity in communities across the province.

The most recent infrastructure funding announcement also included commitments to upgrade Highways 11 and 17 in Northwestern Ontario, as well as the expansion of rural broadband coverage in Southern and Eastern Ontario.

No time line for investigation

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engage in discussions with our Crown Attorney to assist in our review," said Larkin.

There is no indication how long the investigation will take, or whether charges will be laid.

"It is premature to speculate at this time as to how long it will take, or the direction it may take," said Larkin.

In the mean time, some farmers have gassed or disposed of their pigeons, while others are holding out hope.

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