

Press Release

For immediate release

Inauguration of Cree Lumber sawmill in Waswanipi

Cree Lumber will be contributing to Cree Social and Economic Growth for Future Generations

Waswanipi, November 24, 2022 – The Cree First Nation of Waswanipi, Mishtuk Corporation and Chantiers Chibougamau are proud to announce the inauguration of the Cree Lumber sawmill. This historic announcement builds on the signing of the *Paix des Braves* 20 years ago and represents the result of a unique partnership in Waswanipi. Through this project, the Cree First Nation of Waswanipi expresses its desire to transform renewable natural resources, the trees on their territory, to meet the housing needs of the Cree Nation and beyond. They see this project as an engine of pride and ambition for young people and the future of their community.

Over \$20 million investment in Waswanipi

This investment directly benefits the Waswanipi community and contributes to the region's economic vitality. In addition to the investments of the shareholders of the mill, Cree Lumber is also benefiting from contributions from Investissement Québec, Canada Economic Development for Québec Regions, Natural Resources Canada, the Cree Nation Government and the Société de développement de la Baie-James.

30 long lasting jobs created to welcome traditional Cree culture

The new Cree Lumber sawmill is designed for employees' needs at heart. Cree Lumber will create 30 long lasting and stable work opportunities for the community members. The working schedule has been thought and carefully created to welcome traditional culture, hunting and fishing periods. Its 48 production weeks are organized so employees have the time to honour their strong Cree heritage. Years ago, working on the mill was a hard physical job that was only suitable for certain people. Cree Lumber has made numerous improvements to modernize equipment. As a result, the mill can now accommodate all genders and ages.

Responding the Housing Needs in Eeyou Istchee

The need for housing in the Waswanipi Cree community is critical and growing. At Eeyou Istchee, 5,250 new single-family dwellings will be required over the next 15 years. It is imperative to put in place concrete solutions adapted to the population's needs.

Cree Lumber is very proud to contribute facilitate house construction in Cree communities by providing lumber and materials to the community to meet the urgent housing needs. Logging will be used almost exclusively to harvest timber for housing, thus meeting a basic need.

Brief

- Under the *Paix des Braves* agreement, the Cree First Nation of Waswanipi holds wood allocation, in addition to a historical mill permit, to harvest timber through its forestry arm, the Mishtuk

Corporation.

- Through its forestry corporation that celebrates its 40th anniversary in 2022, Misthuk, Waswanipi lead this company while Chantiers Chibougamau is a strategic and minority shareholder.
- Cree Lumber will process natural resources to provide lumber products to build up to 2000 houses on a yearly basis.
- This project will make Cree Lumber one of the most modern sawmills in Quebec.
- The work organization has been designed to facilitate the integration of Cree workers. Thanks to its organizational flexibility, Cree Lumber will allow its employees to honour their traditional commitments such as Moose Break or Goose Break.
- It is a project in line with the principles of sustainable development. Responsible use of the region's natural resources without depleting them; all the while tackling the challenges of climate change.
- The population of Waswanipi is about 1,400 which puts into perspective the importance of this project.

Quotes

"It's all about sustainability: we take only what we need to sustain ourselves. With the modern day, we do need to create economic opportunities and economic prosperity, The announcement of Cree Lumber is part of that vision of sustainability that is much needed for us as a community. Having the mill reopen allows people to be part of the solution in addressing the housing crisis and encourage them to build their own home so we're not so heavily dependent on social housing."

- Irene Neeposh, Chief of the Cree Community of Waswanipi

"It is a great pleasure to be present to see the next step of development for the Cree Nation of Waswanipi. The presence of partners is the key highlight to the realization of a project to enhance the rightful place of indigenous peoples in one of the key industries of our region. I believe it is a first step to enhancing our presence as a nation and becoming key players in an industry seeking inclusivity to accommodate our relationship with the territory."

- Mandy Gull-Masty, Grand Chief of the Cree Nation Government (Eeyou Istchee)

"We are proud of the creation of long-lasting jobs for the Waswanipi community. Those jobs won't go away overnight, whether it's in mechanics or trucking, they will directly contribute to the expansion and the sustainability of Cree Lumber."

- Paul Gull, CEO and Chairman of the board, Cree Lumber

"One of the most important elements in this project is to provide jobs for the young people of our community. Long and sustainable jobs that they can make a career out of and maybe lead them to more professional engineering or technician programs or even start their own businesses one day. Ultimately, Cree Lumber is the community company, and we are doing this work for them! Having this project is a perfect economic development example to bear for the community in terms of the way we live and representing our traditional values."

- Tony Gull, Director General, Mishtuk Corporation

“Today’s announcement is not an end goal; we are investing to give our know-how and ensure the longevity and sustainability of this Waswanipi-lead project and make it a business and social success. It first starts with the technologies that we have carefully mobilized, with our partners, that are adapted for Nord-du-Québec boreal forest. When the community asked forestry companies in their search for a partner for this ambitious project, it was natural and also very important for us to accept the invitation and put all our energy and all our resources into taking up the challenge.”

- Michel Filion, Chief Operating Officer, Chantiers Chibougamau

“Today’s announcement at Cree Lumber Limited Partnership represents excellent news for the Waswanipi community and the Nord-du-Québec region. Our government is proud to grant \$2.4M to support this project, which will generate major economic spin-offs for the entire region. This investment will enable the Waswanipi sawmill to reduce its environmental footprint by using renewable forestry resources and enhancing its competitiveness. Congratulations to the entire team on their efforts and pursuit of this green shift.”

- The Honourable Pascale St-Onge, Minister of Sport and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions

“Beyond the promising economic benefits for every stakeholder involved in this project, I am especially pleased to see that two Cree businesses from the Waswanipi community will be deeply involved in the wood processing value chain supported by our investment. I think that this partnership will build valuable expertise and generate positive spin-offs to support community development. All of this makes our government exceedingly thrilled, and I am keen to see the finished renovation project myself.”

- Ian Lafrenière, Minister Responsible for Relations with the First Nations and the Inuit

“Re-commissioning the Waswanipi sawmill is a win-win strategic investment project. In addition to generating robust and sustainable economic growth in Nord-du-Québec, it will strengthen our relationship with the Cree First Nation, which will benefit Québec as a whole.”

- Pierre Fitzgibbon, Minister of Economy, Innovation and Energy, Minister Responsible for Regional Economic Development and Minister Responsible for the Metropolis and the Montréal Region

“I am thrilled to see the start of a new partnership between a flagship company in our community—Chantiers Chibougamau—and the Waswanipi Cree community to re-open their sawmill. I am confident this new venture will be successful, which is in line with our vision to maximize the potential of Nord-du-Québec, both in terms of its forest industry as well as for the partnership between the Jamesian and Cree communities.”

- Denis Lamothe, Member for Ungava

“The Société de développement de la Baie-James wants to congratulate all the instigators of this major industrial project which will contribute to the local development of a large volume of forest resources. We are very pleased to have the opportunity to lend our support through an investment totalising \$1.3 million.”

- Alain Coulombe, Chief executive officer, Société de développement de la Baie-James

Informations

Laurence Gagnon
TACT
Cellulaire : 418 690-9716
lgagnon@tactconseil.ca