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Leading Manufacturing Group Marks Grand Opening

Catherine Lee
Reporter

Leading Manufacturing Group Inc. who broke ground on their facility last September celebrated their Official Grand Opening last Friday.

Willie Davie, Quality Control Manager for Leading, served as emcee for the historic day. He shared their excitement about "this beautiful facility in the heart of this bountiful province."

"Vermilion is a vibrant and stable community in which to do business," he continued.

Located on 7.1 acres north and east of Fountain Tire on the east side of the Town of Vermilion, Leading (LMG) completed their first tank in April. Administration Manager, Debbie Hudson explained their 53,000 square foot facility employs 65 at present with a plan to grow to 100.

During Friday's event, emcee Davie said there are three keys to the success of this new facility - location, facility and people.

The majority of LMG's market is in this area in places such as Bonneyville or Elk Point so its location in Vermilion at the junction of Highway 16 and Highway 41 is effective. LMG builds tanks with capacities from 50 barrel to 3,000

barrel and their Vermilion location offers quick delivery on tank parts and tank accessories.

The facility itself is crucial as well, said Davie. Its innovative design with many modern high tech components is a healthy and safe place for employees.

LMG's greatest asset is its people and Davie said this plant attracts a diverse work force from office staff to trades people on the floor. Administrative Manager, Hudson said one of the defining features of LMG in Vermilion is the staff's experience. "If you added up all the years of the main staff right now, I bet you there are 300 years experience."

In the steel storage tank fabrication business, "welders are our primary employees" said Hudson. She said positions range from apprentice to journeymen. "We also do foaming and painting of the tanks so we need some experi-



Leading Manufacturing Group Grand Opening

Town of Vermilion Mayor Bruce Marriott, Leading Manufacturing Group (LMG) Administration Manager Debbie Hudson, LMG President Lee Gottschlich and MLA for Vermilion-Lloydminster Lloyd Snelgrove cut the ribbon to mark LMG's official grand opening of their Vermilion facility last Friday. The 53,000 sq. ft. facility employs 65 with plans to grow to 100 employees.

enced foamers." "From what I've seen and heard, Vermilion is a place to be," said Davie on Friday and he said its vibrancy is a testament to the commitment of Town Council.

Vermilion's Mayor Bruce Marriott was on hand to cut the ribbon that day and he said it was easy to make the necessary

changes for LMG's President Lee Gottschlich when he approached Vermilion with an offer to establish here. Marriott commented that LMG's presence means a lot to the town and he welcomed the company's employees to this safe, vibrant and caring community.

continued on page 2

Greenlawn REA Sells System

Catherine Lee
Reporter

In a decision reached last Tuesday evening, the Greenlawn Rural Electrification Association (R.E.A.) decided to sell their distribution system to Atco Electric for a price of \$4.5 million.

Brent Kobelka, Manager of the South East Region at Atco Electric said "a number of months ago, the Greenlawn board of directors came to us, asking if we'd be interested in making an offer on their distribution system."

Initially, when rural areas received electricity, farmer-owned cooperatives were formed for the ownership of the distribution system. The Greenlawn Association, located north of Dewberry

involves 232 members and was started in 1949.

President of the Greenlawn R.E.A., Larry Bensmiller said "I hate to see it dissolve, but I guess it's time." He said "we weren't getting any help or feedback from our members." Bensmiller feels that maybe the R.E.A. has served its purpose. In past years, "the old members used to go out and cut brush but due to liability we can't do things like that anymore," said Bensmiller.

Bensmiller said the Greenlawn R.E.A. was one of the few in good shape so amalgamating with other groups wouldn't have made sense. They have a good reserve and their lines are in good shape. The reserves will be divided

evenly along with the sale proceeds, said Bensmiller.

Kobelka said the purchase was certainly something they were interested in and the board felt Atco's proposal was fair and took it to their full membership. Atco presented their purchase proposal and Kobelka said it was an overwhelmingly favourable vote with 96.6% voting to sell their distribution system.

"We've had a relationship with them right from the beginning," said Kobelka as he explained Atco has always serviced this area. Consumers will notice some subtle differences according to Kobelka. "Members will still continue to see Atco in their yards, talk

with Atco for service and safety issues and some rates will change."

One of the benefits of Atco ownership will be advantageous changes to the rates for transformer changes, breaker changes and the installation of new services, said Kobelka.

"From our perspective, it represents a purchase for us and we're in the business of owning and operating distribution systems. It is growth," said Kobelka.

The deal will take a few months to close as it goes through an approval process. It will be like a Christmas present said Bensmiller. "I'm sad to see it go - a lot of people put a lot of thankless hours into it," he said.

In This Week's Issue:

ALUS Site Tour
Page 2-3

Weekly Voices
Pages 6-7

Graduations
Page 10-12

Vermilion Outreach
Page 16

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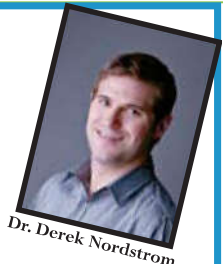
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LOCAL NEWS

LMG Ribbon-Cutting

continued from page 1

Lloyd Snelgrove, MLA for Vermilion-Lloydminster, bringing his warmest regards, pointed out that "it's all about choices in Alberta". He commended LMG for bringing this opportunity to the area. He said estimates place Alberta in a growth cycle that should last between ten and 15 years. "You've given Vermilion and area opportunities we didn't

have before."

In its quest to provide the energy sector with quality steel products, growth continues for LMG and "once we get to our full capacity for staff, we probably will double the amount of tanks produced," said Administration Manager Hudson.

LMG President Lee Gottschlich began with a dream 35 years ago to own and run his own business. "The same dream

continues today - this is another phase of the original dream," said emcee Davie.

Gottschlich was grateful to the town, saying "the town has been so great to work with". He's aware that working in a larger centre like Lloydminster, Edmonton or Nisku would not even have moved beyond the approval stage a year later.

"We wouldn't even be in the ground."

"It can be done and it will be done"

was a phrase Gottschlich said he used

with contractors to get such a large project up and running in a short time. "It wasn't just Lee," he said, "it was all the people."

LMG is building another plant in Saskatchewan, but the Vermilion plant will be their main one. "We'll build satellite plants from Vermilion," explained Gottschlich. "I don't know when it's going to stop. Who knows what we might dream up next?"

ALUS and Producers Team Up

Catherine Lee
Reporter

The Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) Demonstration Site tour held last Tuesday showcased two local farmers putting their land to use for environmental purposes.

Sean McGrath of Round Rock Ranching ranches south east of Vermilion and Trent Selte farms and ranches in Range

47 - 4 of the County of Vermilion River north west of Paradise Valley.

Running a pilot project here in the County of Vermilion River, ALUS offers producers incentive payments to use portions of their land for the production of clean air and water, wildlife habitat and carbon sequestration. Over 1,000 acres have been enrolled in the program with 11 different demonstration projects.

Other participants in the area with

demonstration sites are Doug and Cheryl Livingstone, Cliff and Patty Driver, Don and Carol Selte, John and Mary Gabrielson, Brian and Rhonda Headon, Ed and Mary Parke, J. Chamberlain, S. Chamberlain and Pam Chamberlain.

ALUS is an organization that started in Manitoba fifteen years ago, shared Rob Olson with Waterfowl Delta. It seeks to find environmental balance in light of Alberta's tremendous growth and the

pressure that growth places on resources.

The annual incentive payments that participants receive are on par with local rental rates and those involved also have access to help with start-up costs for their ALUS projects. This "fee for service" concept is based on a three-year agreement and rewards farmers for stewardship practices many are already using.

continued on next page

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