

## Letter to the Editor

### Pontiac Needs Industry.

On October 31<sup>st</sup> 2008, it was announced that Smurfit Stone Mill at Portage would close. 326 people lost their jobs. This caused a domino effect and we lost many other mills, related businesses, restaurants and retail that were supported by these employed people. A promise was made by the provincial government that tourism would replace forestry. Gradually we are seeing tourism grow. This makes us a destination for wilderness experiences, adventure, eco and agritourism. This is great with spin-off benefits but to be truly sustainable and to grow our population we need new industry which offers permanence with good pay to local residents. For the Pontiac to revitalize to attract new residents is important but we also need to improve the quality of life for the families who are here now.

Today we have many residents that need to travel each month to Alberta, the Northwest Territories and Northern Quebec so that they can feed their families and pay their mortgages in the Pontiac. The people of the Pontiac have always had the reputation for being the best workers especially with forestry, heavy machinery, construction, the trades and mining.

With respect to the energy from waste (EFW) proposal, many people have contacted me with their support saying that "more than anything, Pontiac needs industry." These people are long-time residents who remember the heavy industrial boom times of the Pontiac.

Some other people have concerns about the potential number of trucks carrying waste from Ontario and Quebec to Pontiac or are concerned about the content of emissions.

Let's compare to our former industry where Monday to Friday the Portage mill received daily 90 round wood trucks, 60 wood-chip trucks and 6 chemical trucks. The trucks were at least 53

feet long and crossed at the Chenaux Dam as fifty per cent of the wood was coming from Ontario. It was from the Renfrew County mills as well as private and crown land from Mattawa. The AFA were sending trucks from Algonquin Park. The other fifty per cent came from Quebec where Highway 148 and Highway 301 were heavily used from Vallee de la Gatineau, Laurentides and Mont Laurier. The Smurfit Stone mill had emissions that had a smell of a pulp and paper business. At the time the people in the Pontiac were proud of this industry.

In comparison, the EFW facility will have approximately 35 trucks per day total.

The emissions from the EFW facility will have no odour and the steam that is emitted is 99.9% pure to the air. The product produced is electricity which Quebec and especially the Pontiac will always need.

As we look to Pontiac's future it is my hope that we can work together with an open mind to investigate every opportunity so that we can attract new industry and also ensure that it is good for the well-being of our residents to help us once again be an economically successful region.

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