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FNA Members help re-establish Wallaceburg as a crucial port

By Mark Oddan

WALLACEBURG, ON -- This small town south of Sarnia had a big reason to celebrate last week, as FNA brought two barges of Russian fertilizer into its port. Once a thriving inland port, Wallaceburg hasn't enjoyed any significant port traffic for decades until now.

Serving as the catalyst to re-introduce shipments to the town FNA set up a warehouse and distribution facility in this town earlier this year and has now worked with local authorities to make this historic shipment happen. If FNA and the community can get the provincial and federal governments to re-designate Wallaceburg as an official port, the impact on FNA and the local economy could be enormous.

"The impact on our members could be potentially substantial, as this method of shipping gives FNA the opportunity to significantly lower shipping costs on a wide variety of products, which will allow us to offer members even greater value," said Ross Guenther, FNA fertilizer program manager. "This event will hopefully also have a large positive economic spin for the area in multiple sectors of the economy, not just agriculture. It is also intended to enhance support for upgrading the port facilities which will result in higher usage of the port."

FNA regional manager Nic Walby, says this shipment is about FNA's commitment to the future viability of Ontario agriculture. "We anticipate the long term benefit for FNA members to be substantial, as a port in Wallaceburg will allow for more cost effective shipping, which results in higher farm profitability. The port also represents the long term commitment of FNA to Ontario producers, as well as creating competition in the industry. The opportunity exists for a region wide positive economic spin for many businesses in the area because of the increased use of the port."

Several hundred community members, FNA Members and elected officials celebrated with a barbecue as the barges came in, and town council declared it Port of Wallaceburg Day.

This is not the first historic shipment for FNA, who has brought in many shipments of fertilizer for Members from around the world in recent years. In October of 2007, FNA brought in the first foreign shipment to the Port of Churchill, Manitoba, which in turn kick-started more imports and further economic opportunities for the mostly idle port.

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