

Digby shipyard gets assistance from feds, provincial governments

TINA COMEAU TRICOUNTY VANGUARD

Published April 11, 2018 - 7:54pm



A.F. Theriault and Son Ltd. moving ahead with \$6.65 million expansion. TINA COMEAU

Twenty-five years ago A.F. Theriault and Son Ltd. was faced with a choice — scale down or diversify.

But then scaling down was never a real choice, said managing director Gilles Theriault, because it would have had a negative impact on the local and regional economy.

And now the company continues to grow. An announcement was made at the shipyard Wednesday, which will provide a huge boost to the economy and the company. A.F. Theriault, the province's oldest and largest family-owned shipyard, is forging ahead with a \$6.65 million expansion of the business that will add jobs and double work capacity.

The Digby County shipyard intends to construct a new marine railway, purchase new equipment and undertake needed office upgrade to accommodate the projected increase in production. Once complete, the work will allow the shipyard to build and service larger vessels.

"Our capacity has reached its limit," said Theriault. "Soon we will be able to say we can carry out refits on vessels over 1,500 tonnes

Theriault said the company is excited to be moving forward with this expansion. He said work on the office expansion has already started and the process of studying the engineering for the new slipway has also begun.

The expansion work is expected to add 40 new skilled manufacturing and engineering jobs to the existing workforce of 120 people that is drawn from the Yarmouth, Clare and Digby regions and beyond. There will also be construction jobs associated with the project.

A.F. Theriault is getting help as it moves ahead with its ambitious expansion. The federal government is loaning the company \$2.315 million through the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency's business development program.

The company is also the first recipient of funding through the newly-created Innovation Rebate Program from Nova Scotia Business Inc. The shipyard has been approved for a \$1.54 million rebate, which is 25 per cent of the eligible project costs. It will receive this rebate after it completes the work.

A.F. Theriault and Son Ltd. has seen four generations of the Theriault family come through its doors since starting in 1938.