

BUSINESS

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Benefitting from the leaders of industry

Business Nova Scotia panel created to assist government on economic conditions

BRETT BUNDALE
TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL

The tide may be going out on luxury seafood products, but the seaplant industry is doing swimmingly.

Acadian Seaplants Ltd. exports value-added, seaweed-based products to more than 70 countries around the world. With exports totalling \$35 million a year, a 300-person strong payroll, and ever-expanding processing plants in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, the com-

pany is diversified enough to weather the economic downturn.

But Jean-Paul Deveau, president of Acadian Seaplants, isn't taking any chances. He's become one of 14 business leaders from Nova Scotia to join Premier Rodney MacDonald's economic advisory panel. And he thinks the New Brunswick government could benefit from doing the same.

The panel represents a range of businesses in the province including retail, infrastructure and agriculture. Through quarterly meetings over the

next two years, the business leaders will provide the Conservative government feedback, information and advice on economic conditions.

"I think it's an excellent idea to reach out to the business community to help the province through the economic slowdown and into the future," Deveau said in an interview from Yarmouth, N.S.

"It's a good move by government and other governments would also benefit from the advice and opinions of industry leaders."

With plants in Yarmouth, Charlesville and Cornwallis, N.S., Miminogash, P.E.I., and Pennfield, N.B., Deveau, like many business leaders, has a finger on the economic pulse of

Atlantic Canada. This hands-on experience helps him spot financial trends quickly – invaluable information for governments trying to steer an economy clear of a looming recession.

"Often governments operate based on statistics, which take time to be collected," Deveau said. "We see firsthand the changes in the economy and given the cross-section of the business leaders on the panel, we are well positioned to offer the government timely advice."

Acadian Seaplants specializes in manufacturing, cultivating and processing marine plant products for global agri-chemical and animal feed

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'Often governments operate based on statistics'

BENEFITTING ← C1

markets. The processing plant in Cornwallis also has a research and development centre, with 18 scientists on staff.

A popular product in Asian food markets is Acadian Seaplants edible seaweed products.


"We make a product that is used in a seaweed salad that is very popular in Japan," Deveau said.

"But it's not a luxury food, so it hasn't been impacted by the crisis like lobster has."

While Deveau spends much of his time at the Acadian Seaplants head office in Dartmouth, N.S., he is originally from Moncton and expressed interest in a

similar economic advisory panel in New Brunswick.

"It certainly makes a lot of sense," Opposition Leader David Alward said.

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"The challenge in tough economic times is that people tend to go into cocoons. We feel like we're isolated islands. But if we bring different parts of the

economy together to discuss the challenges, we can come up with viable solutions."

Business New Brunswick spokesman Ryan Donaghy said the government consults with business leaders in the province on a daily basis.

"We've had successful meetings and conversations with businesses regularly and we plan to continue our efforts into the New Year."

On the Nova Scotia panel along with Deveau of Acadian Seaplants is Colin Dodds of Saint Mary's University, John Bragg of Oxford Frozen Foods, Paul Sobey of Empire Co. Ltd. and Al MacPhee of the Nova Scotia Automobile Dealers Association.