



Lower Churchill Project to move forward with next major phase of marine cable crossing activity in Strait of Belle Isle

August 28, 2014, St. John's, NL – The Strait of Belle Isle marine cable crossing component of the Lower Churchill Project reached a significant milestone today with the completion of the sixth and final bore hole required for the crossing of the Labrador-Island Transmission Link through the Straits.

“Work is progressing well on all components of the Muskrat Falls Project and the early and safe completion of the drilling work for the Strait of Belle Isle marine cable crossing is another significant milestone for the project,” said Gilbert Bennett, Vice President, Lower Churchill Project, Nalcor Energy. “Our Strait of Belle Isle marine crossing team and contractors have successfully completed the first phase of this work without any lost-time accidents. I look forward to their continued success and safe work as they progress to the next phases of work.”

To connect the 1,100km transmission line from Labrador to Newfoundland, a 35km marine cable crossing will be constructed across the Straits, from Forteau Point, Labrador to Shoal Cove, Newfoundland. The marine cable crossing includes the installation and operation of three marine power cables along the seabed across the Straits. The marine crossings team utilized a specially-designed horizontal directional drilling rig to drill the six holes from the shoreline and out under the seabed on both sides of the Straits. The team used some of the most advanced drilling equipment available in the oil and gas industry for positioning the bore holes on target.

Direct Horizontal Drilling provided the drill rig and surface equipment and Baker Hughes provided the directional services required for drilling program.

“Direct Horizontal Drilling is proud to be part of this important milestone for Nalcor Energy-Lower Churchill Project and the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador,” said Lon Briscoe President, Direct Horizontal Drilling. “Our experience working with Nalcor and their Strait of Belle Isle drilling team has proven to be one of the most safety-orientated and professional teams that Direct Horizontal has been involved with. Our locally-hired Newfoundland and Labrador drilling crews proved themselves this past winter season, dealing with complex down hole conditions and extreme weather. We look forward to completing the next phase of the project safely and on budget.”

“The marine crossing project wells pushed the technical limits as it relates to directional drilling and well bore positioning, accuracy was essential,” said Darren Drake, Operations Director, Drilling Services, Baker Hughes. “Challenges abounded, but its successful completion is a testament of the experience, focus and commitment of the entire execution team.”

The next phase of the work will involve the installation of sea floor conduits (casing) on each side of the Straits to transition the cables from shore to deep water. The conduits will extend out under land and exit onto the ocean floor at a depth of greater than 70m. All cable conduits are expected to be completed by late 2014. When the conduits are installed by Direct Horizontal Drilling, a marine vessel with a subsea remotely operated vehicle will inspect each casing.

The final phase of work in the Straits will involve a cable installation vessel that will install the three transmission cables on the sea floor. Rock berms will then be placed over each cable by a rock-laying vessel to protect the cables from marine vessel traffic and fishing activity. This final phase of work is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2016.

Quick Facts:

- The first bore hole for the transmission cables in Shoal Cove started drilling in December and all three bore holes were completed in April. Drilling for the first bore hole in Forteau started in June and drilling for the final hole was completed on August 28.
- Each bore hole was drilled using bits that were 375 mm in diameter.
- Each of the bore holes on the Newfoundland side were drilled over 2,000m from shore and each on the Labrador side are about 1,200m.
- The length of the bore holes for the transmission cable landfalls are among the longest in the world. Typically bore holes for landfall applications are less than 1,000 metres.

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Horizontal directional drilling rig used to drill the six bore holes for the Strait of Belle Isle marine cable crossing.

