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Pinnacle's Williams Lake pellet facility upgrades complete

Pinnacle Renewable Energy's Williams Lake facility has started operations again following months of capital upgrades.

Between upgrades at the Williams Lake facility and the work undertaken in Quesnel on Pinnacle's Meadowbank facility, the firm has invested close to \$30 million (€19.7 million) in this region over the past year.

Robert McCurdy, CEO of Pinnacle, said: "We are thrilled that the hopes we had to upgrade our Williams Lake facility and position it for a strong future have all come to pass. We have built new levels of resilience and safety into our Williams Lake pellet facility."

One of the main upgrades was equipment that can process wetter fibre. Instead of primarily relying on the shavings and sawdust of sawmills, the Williams Lake facility can also process up to 80,000 additional tonnes of the woody debris left behind after logging. According to Pinnacle, this material is typically burned in brush piles, but this upgrade turns the facility into even more of a recycling centre for bioenergy.

The Williams Lake facility can now utilise marginal, damaged, and dead wood, and can process wood impacted by fire. This maximises the forest's materials, cuts down on wildfire fuel and promotes forest health, says Pinnacle. The facility's upgraded dryer system will also allow for lower emission concentrations and a reduced risk of haze, as well as reducing over-drying.

Air filtration and fugitive dust were also addressed during the renovations, adding a lot of new pavement and making the site cleaner and safer. Overall, the upgrades have contributed more than 90,000 hours of labour for the Williams Lake construction economy; Pinnacle says the upgrades will allow for a boost in employment, both at the facility and in the local forest industry.

"The project was completed safely with no injuries," added McCurdy. "We haven't lowered our production volume at our facilities and we remain focused on working safely inside the facility and any work associated with our operations."

"I would like to give all the employees at Pinnacle a lot of credit. We work very hard to make sure everybody is safe and also keep the plant safe and isolated, since we are deemed an essential service. Company-wide, we set a weekly production record in the midst of the pandemic, so having the safety protocols in place and using additional PPE has become a challenge that our employees have embraced."

"Our newly upgraded Williams Lake facility is one more reason to smile in these unusual times."



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Pinnacle Renewable Energy has received shareholder approval for the planned takeover by Drax Group. A meeting on 31 March saw an