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## St-Pierre-Miquelon hoping to feed off region's oil and gas know-how 🖨️

CORY HURLEY  
The Western Star



Thierry Basle, right, development manager of the Sodepar development agency in St-Pierre-Miquelon, chats with Western Newfoundland Oil and Gas Steering Committee members Trina Burden, Lori Coleman and Sharon McLennon. — Star Photo by Cory Hurley

**CORNER BROOK** — Western Newfoundland and St-Pierre-Miquelon appear to have a sleek little partnership mounting pertaining to the oil and gas industry.

Thierry Basle, development manager with the Sodepar development agency in St-Pierre-Miquelon, was in Corner Brook Monday for an introduction to western Newfoundland and Labrador pertaining to oil and gas. He met with various company and organization representatives to discuss the industry and its potential here.

Basle first met a small delegation representing the city at the Atlantic Petroleum Show in St. John's, where he expressed an interest in bringing an international delegation from St-Pierre-Miquelon to the International Symposium on the Oil and Gas Resources of Western Newfoundland.

"Just like in Newfoundland, fishing industry was the main industry for us and it has been like this until now," Basle told The Western Star Monday.

"Now, we are looking at what we can do next because, unfortunately, there are not too many fish left in the waters around us. We looked, naturally, at the oil and gas industry because it is the industry expanding and it is only beginning in the region."

Geographically the French islands are located in the middle of a major oil and gas field, and Basle said within 12-15 years there will be development there.

Their approach is much the same as what has been said and heard regarding the industry in western Newfoundland.

"We don't want to wait until then to do something," he said.

"The oil and gas industry is happening right here, right now, and we need to get our local companies involved in that industry. We need to get our workforce trained, and it takes several years and some times up to 8-10 years to get really qualified workers with all the certifications and experience that we will need."

The development manager also said St-Pierre-Miquelon has decided to “open up to the outside world”, whereby they would serve as an interface between France and Europe and the provinces in Atlantic Canada.

Basle hopes a meeting in France next week will add more company representatives to their delegation for the symposium.

If it is too short notice, he believes a future session will happen.

Sharon McLellon, co-chair of the Western Newfoundland Oil and Gas Steering Committee, said networking with Saint-Pierre et Miquelon, and furthermore with France and Europe, is a positive step to achieving the objectives of hosting these symposiums.

“This is our third one and we are finding that we are always building,” she said.  
“Our geographic market, in terms of interest and investors or businesses, is Europe, so this is wonderful to see.”

She said interest continues to develop in the United States and western Canada too.  
“You can see the momentum is building and the timing is right to continue to have a symposium, and bring together all the players on what we are calling the next new frontier in terms of oil and gas in western Newfoundland.” she said.

The symposium looking at conventional and unconventional resource plays is slated for Sept. 13-15 at the Humber Valley Resort. For more information or to register call Lori Coleman at 634-5891 or visit [www.wnloilandgas.com](http://www.wnloilandgas.com).

Meanwhile, Basle said he also sees opportunities for partnerships between the development agency and western Newfoundland through things like tourism and shipping.

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