



A.F. Theriault has built 16 Windcats to service offshore wind turbines in Europe.

Windcats bring \$24 m to A.F. Theriault and Son

By Carla Allen

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A.F. Theriault and Son Ltd. will be shipping its 16th Windcat via container ship to Liverpool, England in March. The specialized vessels, costing \$1.5 million each, carry personnel to service offshore wind turbines, a burgeoning business in Europe.

In 2007, the European Union pledged to significantly reduce carbon emissions by 2020. To further this goal, European countries have agreed to produce 20 per cent of their energy from renewable sources such as wind farms and solar energy.

One of the proposed new farms, Markgygden in northern Sweden, would include over 1,000 wind turbines and is expected to generate 10 terawatt (10 trillion watts) hours per year. It will cost \$6.9 billion to build and could be completed within 12-15 years. It is expected to be the largest offshore source of wind energy in Europe.

Graham Oakley, vice president of production at A.F. Theriault and Son Ltd., says orders for more Windcats are expected later this year. Each catamaran measures 17.2 metres in length and has twin 950-horsepower engines. Of the 16, 11 are propeller-driven and five have jet drives. The vessels can carry nine technicians and are equipped with a crane and a ramp on the bow. The boats are able to work in three-metre seas. Several modifications were necessary from the original plans, says Oakley.

“The vessels were increased to 17.2 metres to provide more deck space,” he said.

“(In addition), the vessel engines were increased from 750 hp to 950 hp for more Pollard Pull. The fore and aft decks were modified to accept specialized containers on deck for transporting equipment to the offshore turbines,” he said.

A. F. Theriault and Son Ltd. is one of the largest privately owned shipyards in Canada’s Atlantic region. The business is highly diversified and has built unmanned drones used by navies throughout the world, pleasure yachts, draggers, fireboats, whale watching boats, ferries, longliners, cabin cruisers and patrol boats.