

NEWS LEADER & PICTORIAL

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Future of our forests up for local debate

By Mike D'Amour News Leader Pictorial

The future of an industry was the hot topic during a meeting between forestry executives and community leaders in Cowichan Bay yesterday.

The confab, co-hosted by Coast Forest Products Association and Forestry Innovation Investment, took place at the Oceanfront Grand Resort & Marina. It was scheduled to start at 1:30 p.m. and expected to run most of the afternoon.

While details of the meeting were not available by press time, it is known scheduled topics included the changes faced by forest dependent communities on the B.C. coast over past years.

"The future for many B.C. coastal communities goes hand in hand with the future of the forest sector," said Rick Jeffery, president of CFPA.

"It's important for our community leaders to have the opportunity to engage in a dialogue which explores the impacts of global markets on wood products manufacturing in our communities."

Other topics that were to be discussed included the changing competitive landscape in international markets, the coast's broadening market orientation, as well as future market and product opportunities that hold promise for renewed prosperity.

Russ Taylor, of International Wood Markets Group; Paul Quinn from Salman Partners; Michael Loseth of FII; BC Forest Safety Council's Tanner Elton and David Morel of the Ministry of Forests and Range were all expected to speak.

Jeffery was also expected to give the group an update on the coastal forestry labour dispute, which has nearly 1,000 Cowichan workers on strike since July 21.

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