

BOAT BUILDING

Traditional Shelburne County boat builder converts to space age technology

Aylward says must adjust, diversify to compete on global market

A Shelburne County boatbuilder is using new technology to gain an edge in the growing pleasure craft market.

Last spring, Aylward Fiberglass produced the first boat in Nova Scotia using the new vacuum infusion technology.

Among his accomplishments, Glen Aylward's 45- to 65-foot Grizzly, a huge, though very fuel-efficient Cape Island style lobster trap hauler, helped to build his reputation as a producer of strong, durable fishing boats.

With Nova Scotia's fishing boat building industry in a decline, Aylward chose to diversify.

Aylward Fiberglass has a 25-foot traditional

trawler design which is available in several versions, including a centre console, bass boat and cabin trawler. Future designs are on the drawing board to service the pleasure craft market.

"We are not competing with local builders anymore, going after the same fishing dollars," said Aylward, owner of Aylward Fiberglass.

"The industry has to seriously look at working together to export our products. We're competing against established international markets which run very efficient operations and are using investment to access the latest boat building designs and technologies.

"It is crucial to get

familiar with these latest production techniques and meet or exceed international standards."

VACUUM INFUSION

Vacuum infusion involves laying out all the dry goods necessary in the boat mould, including layers of fiberglass and core material.

A translucent vacuum bag covers the mould and 14.7 pounds per square inch of vacuum holds the bag down.

Resin is distributed evenly among the dry layers.

Not only is the end product lightweight and strong, but the process creates no volatile and toxic emissions: a major benefit for both employees and the environment.

Aylward will be attending trade shows in the U.S. and central Canada, aimed at the pleasure craft market.

