

158 former MPI employees access resources, expertise at Marathon Area Action Centre 'It's been a pretty busy summer' Bott tells Marathon council

The staff and volunteers at the Marathon Area Action Centre have been pretty busy since the start of operations in early June.

Joy Bott, chairman of the Labour Action Committee established by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, told Marathon Town Council last week that 158 former employees of Marathon Pulp Inc. have been assisted by the centre.

"It's been a pretty busy summer for us and training has been a big component of our work," she said. "Thirty former employees took advantage of our resume workshops and another 30 took advantage of interview workshops and others have taken computer

and word processing sessions."

Bott said 20 former MPI employees participated in the four - day surface/underground mining course and 'we received great support from Barrick with no costs to the participants'.

"So far, one of the participants found work within 14 days, another within 30 days and one is self - employed," she said. "Barrick also provided us with six spaces on their train - the - trainer workshop, 15 are enrolled in the six - week GED course and another 50 have been trained in first aid and CPR."

Bott said that Sylvie Walton from Services Canada was here for a few days offering assistance

with Employment Insurance issues and will be returning in the fall for more work and the Canadian Armed Forces recruiting team was here with one person enrolling.

"Over 280 people lost their jobs when MPI closed in March and, to date, 26 of those now have full - time jobs, 19 have part - time jobs, 15 are temporarily employed, three are self - employed and one has retired," she said. "Other people in the community who have lost their jobs because of the MPI closure have taken advantage of the centre's resources, programs and expertise. The needs assessments for all the former employees are

on - going and we are offering any type of support we can to the community members."

Bott said the eight peer helpers are kept busy in assisting the employees with their resumes and 'this is a big job'.

"For many who have never had to fill out a resume or haven't had to do one in many years, this is a daunting task," she said. "They have to do their part in deciding what it is they want to do for a career. The next thing on our list is to do a major callback on the needs assessments. In the meantime, our social committee is looking at the needs of the families and children."

Bott noted that the MAAC is

supported by the Town of Marathon, the MTUCU and USW Local 548 donated \$2,000, Barrick donated \$1,000, and the Pic River Development Corporation donated \$300.

"As well, we have had very generous in - kind donations, totalling in the thousands, from all the various businesses and individuals in Marathon which is much appreciated," she said. "This generosity gives the former employees and their families some hope and the fact that they are there in support is very encouraging. This is the most important thing."