

# Industry leaders in Saint John to discuss future of ports

JUSTIN SAMANSKI-LANGILLE Telegraph-Journal

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Mathieu Charbonneau, executive director of CargoM, sits outside a conference room during the 2018 Association of Canadian Port Authorities conference in Saint John.

Photo: Justin Samanski-Langille/Telegraph-Journal

**SAINT JOHN** • Representatives from ports across Canada and the world are in Saint John this week for the 60th Annual Conference for the Association of Canadian Port Authorities.

For the first full day of the conference, the focus was placed squarely on the future of ports and the technology they use.

Tiemen Meester, CEO of DP World Americas Region, which manages the shipping operations on the west side at Port Saint John, gave the first keynote presentation of the conference.

His message was simple - the world of port management is changing and everyone needs to be ready for it.

One of Meester's main points was to emphasize the need for port authorities around the world to integrate as closely as possible with the entire transportation chain, from ship, to shore to the highways and railways bringing product to and from the ports.

At a panel discussion later in the day, Mathieu Charbonneau, executive director of CargoM was on hand to discuss the experience he has had doing just that.

CargoM is a cluster bringing together all elements of transportation and cargo handling in the bustling Port of Montreal.

Charbonneau said in the five years since everything from air, sea and ground transportation to city construction planning to research was brought much closer together through a neutral body, the port has seen increases in efficiency even as the amount of cargo going through it has increased.

"The Port of Montreal has been having a record year every year since 2008," said Charbonneau.

"Even though the cargo coming through the city keeps increasing, everything is still moving at a desirable speed. If people keep using the port, then that is our measure of success."

Jim Quinn, president and CEO of the Port Saint John, said that while the CargoM cluster model is needed in large port cities such as Montreal, the issues the model addresses are less noticeable in Saint John.

"We are very fortunate in Saint John that cargo leaves the terminal and goes directly onto our very good highway system," said Quinn.

Another point Meester emphasized in his presentation was the need to do more to attract youth to careers in the sector.

"Our industry has a very hard time competing for talent," said Meester. "More is needed to educate and train in our sector and to attract more youth into our sector."

Quinn agrees and said the Port Saint John is already working on addressing that problem with education programs in local high schools.

"The objective for me is for those young folks to learn a little bit about the opportunities (in this industry) so when they come to the decision points in their lives, they may consider a career in our business," said Quinn.

The conference continues Wednesday with sessions focused on the industry's role in combating climate change, the benefits of being a port city and best practices for increasing Canada's cruise market share.

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