

Calais LNG company holds open house

by Marie Jones Holmes

As a part of the Federal Energy Regulation Commission's (FERC) public participation plan, Calais LNG hosted a July 29 open house at the Washington Community College to acquaint the public with its plan to build a liquefied natural gas (LNG) facility in Calais. Art Gelber, president of Gelber Associates, an energy consulting and advisory firm and a partner in Calais LNG, welcomed the public to the event that featured numerous displays about the establishment of an LNG facility.

FERC, the Maine Bureau of Environmental Protection (BEP) and the U.S. Coast Guard also provided representatives to answer questions about the approval process. At this time, the Calais LNG project is in the preliminary planning phase; the precise facility design, pipeline route and other details have not yet been finalized and a formal application has not been filed with FERC. However, FERC has initiated a pre-application, environmental review process to encourage early involvement by citizens and local government agencies.

Calais LNG seeks to construct an LNG import terminal and related natural gas facilities within the Calais city limits. The proposed terminal location is south of Devil's Head, near Ford Point on the St. Croix River. The terminal would be on about 128 acres on the east side of U.S. Route 1. There would be a single LNG carrier berth located in deep water and connected to land by a 1,000-foot pier. The proposed berth would be located in sufficient water depth so that no dredging would be required. Other components of the project include piping, electrical and con-

trol equipment, two full-containment 160,000-cubic meter storage tanks, vapor handling and regasification and sendout systems. A display that attracted much interest was a chart showing the proposed route tankers would take to reach the terminal berth. The tankers at times would be traversing in Canadian waters. The Canadian government has expressed objections to LNG proposals that would involve ships passing through Canada's Head Harbour Passage. In addition to the Calais LNG project, two other LNG proposals, Quoddy Bay LNG and Downeast LNG, would also be using Head Harbour Passage.

A sendout pipeline that would connect the LNG import terminal facilities to the Maritimes and Northeast Pipeline would be a 36-inch-diameter pipeline about 20 miles in length. The sendout pipeline would interconnect with the Maritime pipeline system near Baileyville. The state has indicated it would like to see the three proposed projects use a route that would serve all three projects.

Ian Emery of Cutler, one of the partners in Calais LNG, says the company would not be developing a distribution system to provide natural gas access for area residents, but the company would work with the city of Calais and any company interested in acting as a distributor. "It is very early in the talking stage now," states Emery.

Calais City Manager Diane Barnes says, "If we have a terminal in the area, we would like to explore the possibility of having natural gas in the area." Barnes stresses any discussion certainly would be in the early stage right now. A thorough study would be necessary to see if natural gas for area residents would be feasible.