

Spirit of Enterprise



GROUPE DESGAGNÉS INC. IS AT THE HEART OF THE ARCTIC'S ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT

Desgagnés as a company dates back to the 19th century, and until the acquisition by Louis-Marie Beaulieu in 1987, was owned and developed through generations of Desgagnés family ownership. For the most part they were mariners and reputed to be outstanding men and women who were both dependable and responsible people. Respect for these values and the history of the family name is a motivating factor to uphold the Desgagnés reputation.

Desgagnés' presence in the Arctic is not a recent development. The first voyage was undertaken in 1960 by the *Aigle d'Océan*, a small cargo vessel barely 50 metres long. Goods were transported for the Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau-Québec, which is the co-op movement in Nunavik, northern Québec, in order to reach various Nunavik ports between Kuujuaq and Kuujuarapik. This humble beginning triggered maritime development of this area for Desgagnés.

Today, the Desgagnés fleet is made up of 18 vessels of different types, namely one passenger/cargo vessel, seven oil tankers, three bulk carriers, six cargo vessels (general cargo and heavy loads), and

an additional passenger/cargo vessel currently under construction.

The vessels collectively transport on a yearly basis more than five million metric tonnes of goods, equating to over 5,500 days/vessels and close to 14,000 passengers.

Desgagnés supplies replenishment services to more than 38 communities in Nunavik and Nunavut, including goods such as food, clothing, vehicles, prefab homes, heavy machinery, and equipment for exploration and mining development. Desgagnés also provides re-fuelling services through its subsidiary Petro-Nav Inc. and owns Tessier Ltée, a sizeable subsidiary company that operates heavy machinery and cranes, based on the North Shore of Quebec.

In 2008, Desgagnés was the first shipping company to service western Arctic from the east (Montreal) through the Northwest Passage, a feat that was broadcast on the *Thalassa* show on channel TV5 in France.

In addition to technical knowledge, good business strategies are essential to development. In this manner, Desgagnés,

who provides sealift services to communities in the five regions of Nunavut, works in partnership with Arctic Co-operatives Limited (ACL), an organisation comprising 19,000 members, with co-op stores situated in the majority of Nunavut communities.

Likewise, Desgagnés, through its services in Nunavik, is also in partnership with the Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau-Québec (FCNQ), which owns co-op stores in all 14 Nunavik communities and boasts more than 7,500 Inuit members, thus representing the near totality of Inuit adults in Nunavik.

All of these aspects can be summed up by two factors, namely "human capital," and "a spirit of enterprise," on the part of the Groupe Desgagnés team. With the goal of improving work in conjunction with the various regions and residents of Nunavik and Nunavut, they continue to develop a company team with a high level of expertise and wherein responsibilities are defined and clearly distributed, that will allow the company to continue the process of contributing to sustainable economic development in these areas. ■