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N.B. forest industry put in the spotlight

■ **Forestry Fair exhibits highlight province's many wood resources**

BY CHARLES PERRY
TIMES & TRANSCRIPT STAFF

SUSSEX — If you wanted to sit in a harvester and simulate trees been chopped down or learn

how the rings from a tree can trace the yearly temperature for an area for the past 450 years, the annual Fundy Model Forest Forestry Fair was the place to be on Saturday.

Held in Sussex in conjunction with the Atlantic International Balloon Fiesta, the fair comprised approximately 40 exhibits, providing a peek into the many facets of forestry and

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celebrating the many benefits received from the forests.

There were also a series of demonstrations covering such topics as grading logs, burning wood more safely and efficiently, an historic look at building hunting bows and a guide to buying lumber.

"We try to keep it interactive and as an educational event for the family," explains Barb Scott of Sussex, communications co-ordinator for the Fundy Model Forest.

"We want to give people a chance to meet those involved in forestry in New Brunswick, get to talk with the experts and see the countless ways the forests affect our daily lives," said Scott. "We want to give people the big picture of forestry in a fun way," she said.

One device that provided fun and education at the fair was the harvester simulator which was demonstrated by Serge Gallant, an instructor in mechanized forest operations for the New Brunswick Community College in Miramichi.

As Gallant pushed the buttons in the simulator, you could see the trees being cut and then de-limbed on a screen attached to the harvester. "It is a valuable training tool for the students before they head out to the woods," he said. "The seat, buttons and other aids are the same as they are in a real harvester."

Dr. Colin Laroque, assistant professor of geography at Mount Allison University, demonstrated how the rings on a tree can be used not only to measure its age, but the age of buildings and an area's climate over hundreds of years.

Laroque said they can examine a beam from an old building, look at the ring pattern and tell when it was used in the facility's construction. He said this is very useful for heritage people in authenticating historic sites.

He also displayed a graph showing the weather pattern for one area, year by year, all the way back to 1550. And again, it was the pattern of the rings on a tree that

allowed them to chart weather changes over that period, he said.

One of his students, Ben Phillips, a fourth year major in geography and environment studies, attracted a lot of attention last year when he discovered the oldest standing red spruce tree in the world in Fundy National Park. After studying the rings, Phillips said it was found the tree was 450 years old.

Norma Bourque of Moncton, administrator of Wood Energy Technology Transfer Inc., said they are a non-profit training and educational association that provides a program and acts as a national registrar for certified professionals regarding wood burning appliances.

Bourque said their mandate is to promote increased safety and efficiency. Along with Environment Canada and Natural Resources Canada, they provided a demonstration on how to burn wood safer, cleaner and more efficiently.

Trites Family Sugarbush of Stilesville, just outside Moncton, displayed an inviting selection of their maple products, including sugar, cream, butter and syrup. Its owner Brent Trites said it is a third generation operation that was started by his grandfather Rufus Trites before 1920. Along with the maple sugar camp, he said they also operate a pancake house during the season and sell their maple products in the Moncton Farmers' Market once a week throughout the year.

Chris Dickie of Fredericton, extension manager for INFOR Inc., said their firm provides education for the sustainable management of woodlands. Included among their clients are maple syrup producers, Christmas tree growers and private woodlot owners.

Sustainable forests are both environmentally and economically beneficial to those dependent on woodlands, said Dickie. He noted there are about 40,000 private woodlot owners in New Brunswick, along with 300 Christmas tree growers and 300 maple producers.