

# Group scouts P.E.I. companies for possible aircraft contracts

Team Spartan hopes to land \$2.6-billion contract for new search, rescue fleet.

BY MIKE CARSON  
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SLEMON PARK — The aerospace industry on Prince Edward Island could be in for a windfall if a proposal by a consortium known as Team Spartan lands a \$2.6-billion federal contract to supply new search-and-rescue aircraft for the Canadian Armed Forces.

Members of Team Spartan were on the Island Friday touring the aerospace facilities at Slemon Park along with Testori Americas Inc. in Summerside.

In the March 2004 federal budget, Ottawa announced funding for the acquisition of a new fleet of fixed-wing search-and-rescue aircraft to replace the CC-130 Hercules and the CC-115 Buffalos.

When this announcement was made, Alenia North America, was established by the Italy-based Alenia Aeronautica with the plan to provide the new aircraft sought by the federal government.

They were joined by L-3 Communications Canada, a supplier of defence systems and solutions along with optimized life support.

Lockheed Martin Aeronautics came on board followed by Rolls-Royce.

Marcello Cianciaruso, program director, Canadian Forces fixed-wing search-and-rescue program for Alenia North America, led Team Spartan on P.E.I. in search of industries to take part in the \$2.6-billion project.

Team Spartan is promoting that the government choose the C-27J Spartan aircraft for its search-and-rescue needs.

"The contract is divided into two parts," Cianciaruso said.

"The first part is the acquisi-



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**Phil Rodgers**, right, president and chief operating officer for MDS-PRAD Technologies Corp. at Slemon Park, shows a part of an aircraft engine that has been treated with the company's erosion prevention coating, to Marcello Cianciaruso, program director Canadian Forces Fixed Wing Search and Rescue Program, Alenia North America. Looking on at left is Bruce Lennie, vice-president of business development and government affairs for Rolls-Royce.

tion phase to basically purchase 15 new platforms. The budget for this part of the contract is about \$1.3 billion. And then for the long-term service and support would be another \$1.3 billion. So the overall contract would be about \$2.6 billion."

Cianciaruso cited the C-27J Spartan's performance, range, speed, room to manoeuvre, ability to perform in remote areas as well as its ability for short takeoffs and landings.

"This makes our aircraft the only twin engine that can deliver the same performance of the CC-130 but more cost-effective maintenance costs," he said.

One of the rules the Canadian government has on the contract is that 100 per cent of the contracted value must go back to Canadian companies.

"That's why we're here,"

Cianciaruso said.

"Basically, through the four team members we are putting together a very high-technology work package that we would like to share with the local companies. Today we were at Atlantic Turbines, we visited Honeywell, Tronos Canada. We are here at MDS-PRAD and we will also go to Weibel and Testori Americas. Based on the capabilities we have found it would be for sure any high-technology package we can share with those companies."

Cianciaruso said not only the aerospace industry will benefit from this team but a satellite company and firms that make trains and buses can bring work to many Island firms and other companies across the country.

"The key message is that through our companies, Cana-

dian companies will achieve a market not available right now," he said.

Cianciaruso said Team Spartan will have a better handle on where the contract stands following the federal government's budget in April.

"We are confident that program is one of high priority," Cianciaruso said.

"It's not only defence. It's also something that all Canadians would benefit from — the search and rescue. Right now we have very old (aircraft) very expensive to maintain. Because we have an airplane that is more cost-effective to maintain and can do the same performance as CC-130 — that's why we are here because we don't want to waste time.

"Our airplane is the only twin engine that can meet those requirements."