Coalition for helping victims of pyrrhotite

Pyrrhotite crisis in Mauricie region
Québec, Canada

Meeting with CCACB – Connecticut

October 1, 2016

Prepared by Michel Lemay, Update September 25
The city of Trois-Rivières is between Montreal and Quebec.

Municipalities affected by pyrrhotite

Approximate population:
- Trois-Rivières: 135,000
- Shawinigan: 50,000
- MRC Maskinongé: 37,000
- Gentilly-Bécancour: 12,800
General information:

5000 houses built between 1996 - 2008
Approximately 4000 houses affected
About 1200 houses repaired as of today
Several public buildings
8 municipalities

**Repairs cost is about 75% of the house value**

Three types of victims

Covered by a warranty plan
No longer covered by warranty
Auto builders

**AFFECTED AREAS:**

Mauricie region

Pyrrhotite sector

Shawinigan

Trois-Rivières
Pyrrhotite history

Pyrite under slab in the Montreal area in the 80

Trois-Rivières pyrrhotite in the 90 (approx. 30 houses)

Pyrrhotite major crisis in the Mauricie region in early 2009

Birth of the Coalition

Created in 2009

Spontaneous regrouping of victims

About 1000 members

A board of directors
Alain Gélinas, President
Involved since 3 years
Representative of the committee out of warranty
Occupation: Sales representative
Functions: Spokesman

Michel Lemay, VP and Co-Founder
Involved since 7 years
Occupation: Manager in a parastatal
Occupation: Architect
Functions: Plans warranty, technical files

Steeve Guy, Coordinator
Involved since 3 years
Occupation: Employee of the Coalition
Functions: Daily support to victims

Other members:

Sylvie Boisclair
Yvon Héroux
Sylvain Arsenault
Richard Hélie
Robert Boudreault

Different expertise put in common and team work = success
OUR MISSION:

Defend the rights and interests of victims

Represent and support the victims of pyrrhotite in the Mauricie region

Work actively to obtain financial assistance programs with governments

Contribute to the revision of standards and quality control in residential construction

Priorities:

- Pool our efforts
- Consolidate with one lawyer if possible
- Represent victims with the lawyer
- Get the mandate to represent victims
- Defend the interests of the victims
- Negotiate on behalf of the victims
- Link to warranty plans
- Links with Medias
These actions are scalable and tailored to the needs.
Our Facebook page:
www.facebook.com/coalition.victimes.pyrrhotite/

Our Web site:
www.cavp.info
Our priority is the victims
Team work
Openness to other’s ideas
Varied expertise of the board members

The trust and support of our members
Strategic approach
Credibility of our organization

Consistency of our actions
Many gains under our belt
Availability
Permanent support for victims

Political networking
Proximity and transparency with the media

Proximity with mayors concerned

Endurance and perseverance
RESUME:

Set up:
- Board of directors
- Registration of our organization
- Logo and Mission
- Website
- Facebook page

Financial aspects:
- School and municipal taxes adjustments
- Obtaining provincial and federal financial aid
- Sponsorship program

Public and media aspects:
- French and English video
- Significant and ongoing media monitoring
- Media interviews (radio, TV, newspaper)

Support to victims:
- Meetings with victims
- Public events
- Solidarity raffles
- Redaction of a guide to help victims

Political aspects:
- Represent victims on a joint committee with warranty plans
- Lobbying government
- Meetings with politicians and mayors
- Establishment of a new secure warranty plan
OUR STRATEGIES:

Important:

Believe in volunteer work
   Work and perseverance

Validate informations
   Be transparent
   Remain credible
   Be structured

Making action plans
   Establish strategies
   Setting priorities
   Go get political support

Follow the progress of cases
   Inform members
   Working within respect
   Stay in touch with the media
 EXAMPLES OF DEVELOPMENT OF PARTNERSHIPS:

**City of Trois- Rivières :**
Financial support and loan office space  
*Very good support from the mayor and his team*

**Government of Quebec:**
Financial support to the coalition and victims assistance program

**Government of Canada:**
Financial assistance for victims

**Media:**
Working with various media in the region

**University of Québec in Trois-Rivières UQTR :**
Creating a master's thesis

**Health Network :**
Establishment of a psychosocial support program
Human and social impacts

Familial impacts
Bankruptcy
Depression
Financial problems
Absence from work
Stress
Diseases
Suicides

OWNERS ARE VICTIMS OF THE PYRRHOTITE
BEHIND THE WALLS OF EACH HOUSE IS HIDDEN REALITY DIFFERENT
SUPPORT AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO DATE:

Assistance program for victim:

$35M from the Government of Quebec since 2011
$30M on three years from the Government of Canada starting in 2016

**THIS MONEY IS TO REPAIR HOUSES**

Coalition CAVP support:

Financial support from the city of Trois-Rivieres
Financial support from the Government of Quebec
Minor financial support from other municipality
Sponsors
Donations of from victims

**This money is used for coalition activities**
HELP FOR VICTIMS AND REPAIRS:

Some financial Highlights

Municipal tax adjustments

School tax adjustments

Government support of $75,000 out of warranty

And also $15,000 for homes on warranty for basement repairs

Discount on purchases of materials
The biggest construction trial in Canada

The judgment of the first trial by the Judge Michel Richard was made in June 2014.

Around 850 victims in this first trial

Laboratory, the quarry, cement mixers and contractors have been ordered to pay nearly $196 million in compensation.

Laboratory is responsible for about 70% of the total bill.

Cement mixers and quarry involved in the case will have to pay 12.5% each of all damage. Contractors will pay the balance of 5%.

The judgment is currently under appeal

Many victims are waiting

Other lawsuits are pending
ABOUT CONCRETE STANDARDS IN QUEBEC:

General informations:

European standards: 0.10% sulfur when pyrrhotite is present

At 0.23% pyrrhotite, foundations were rebuilt by the warranty plans, if warranty still in effect

0.30 % to be eligible for government aid program

0.30 % or less pyrrhotite, currently a gray area

Some victims are prisoners of their pyrrhotite results (gray zone)

Academic studies have been underway for some years and the standards could be changed

The coalition is trying to lower the current standard to 0.23 % or less.

It's an evolutive issue
COALITION CAVP

VISIBILITY AND PUBLIC ACTIONS

Stay in action!
In 2015:
Solidarity rally 3000 people participated

The coalition has organized several public events
PYRRHOTITE PUBLIC MANIFESTATIONS:

Very good participation of victims and media

Slogans, placards and banners

In Mauricie, this issue is topical for over 7 years

Media and population always present during manifestations
MEETINGS WITH VICTIMS:

SUPPORT FROM VICTIMS IS ESSENTIAL AND MUST BE CONTINUED

Public meeting with victims and the media
The coalition is very active in the media

Hundreds of publications during the last 7 years

It is very important to maintain a media presence

WE HAVE OUR REGIONAL MEDIA SUPPORT AND IT MAKE THE DIFFERENCE !!
The coalition continues its mission

Announcement of the judgment for victims (2014)

12 juin 2014 - 15:51 | Mis à jour : 18:03
Pyrrhotite: SNC-Lavalin responsable à 70%
Par Matthieu Max-Gessier

TROIS-RIVIÈRES - La Cour supérieure a donné raison aux 69 demandeurs du recours collectif intenté contre SNC-Lavalin et son géologue Alain Blanchette, ainsi que les bétonniers et les entrepreneurs dans le dossier de la pyrrhotite. La firme d’ingénierie devra assumer 70% des dommages causés par la pyrrhotite.

Dans son jugement phare rendu public aujourd’hui, le juge Michel Richard condamne SNC-Lavalin, Carrière B. & B inc. et Construction Yvan Boisvert inc. à payer la somme de 304 691,42 $ aux demandeurs. Il établit par ailleurs la responsabilité de SNC-Lavalin et de son géologue Alain Blanchette à 70%, Carrière B. & B inc. et Construction Yvan Boisvert inc. partageront 25% du montant à payer et les entrepreneurs et les coiffeurs impliqués devront en assumer 5%.
ACADEMIC INVOLVEMENT:

University of Trois-Rivieres (UQTR)

Partnership

Psychological studies and impacts of pyrrhotite on victims
PUBLIC PARTNERSHIP:

Examples of partnership

Estate chamber of Mauricie financial support

Also, other sponsors

Meeting with the new warranty plan in Quebec, GCR

City of Trois-Rivières
EXAMPLES OF POLITICAL ACTIONS:

Ottawa to spend $30M on helping Quebec homeowners who have pyrrhotite

Prime minister of Canada

Meeting with regional politicians

Meeting with NPD chief
PYRRHOTITE IMPACTS IN MAURICIE

PHOTOS OF THE SITUATION
CONCRETE DAMAGE:

Similar to damage found in Connecticut
EXAMPLES OF AFFECTED BUILDINGS:

Institutional

Condo

Single family

Townhouses
EXAMPLES OF AFFECTED BUILDINGS:

- Multi-housing
- Luxury property
- Entire streets
- Entire neighborhoods
EXAMPLES OF AFFECTED BUILDINGS:

- Sport center
- Hospital
- University building (UQTR)
- Commercial
EXAMPLES OF REPAIRS:

Before repairs

Removal of the masonry

Basement demolition

Basement demolition
EXAMPLES OF REPAIRS:

- Basement demolition
- Storage and demolition
- Lift of the house
- New foundation
New home, SWEET HOME !!
LEADING PRACTICES
LEADING PRACTICES

This is a complex issue
Stay united together

Support your coalition
Participate in activities

Get involved
Educate the elected people

Have good media support
Don’t get discouraged

Do not give up
We understand you!

The Quebec Coalition is pleased to cooperate with you.

We understand what you are going through.

Owners are victims of Pyrrhotite and don't forget that behind each home walls is a hidden reality.
Video presentation
Questions period

Thank you

Presented by:
Alain Gélinas and Michel Lemay

October, 1 2016