

Mayor feels good about pitch to Cliffs

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They say Cleveland is nice this time of year.

That's what a delegation of Greenstone leaders were feeling Thursday as they rode the euphoria of what appeared to be a successful sales pitch to Cliffs Natural Resources top executives regarding the location for a chromite processor.

"They asked some tough but important and insightful questions," Greenstone Mayor Ron Beaulieu said Thursday.

"Clearly they have been giving a lot of consideration to the benefits of the Exton site (near Nakina)."

Wednesday's face-to-face meeting in Cleveland included Beaulieu, Greenstone chief administrator Roy Sinclair, former Ontario Energy minister George Smitherman and former Nishnawbe Aski Nation grand chief Charles Fox, who emphasized to Cliffs "the overarching importance of the Matawa First Nations co-operation to the success of the project."

Cliffs, which wants to have its chromite mine 500 kilometres north of Thunder Bay in operation by 2015, is considering various possible processor locations, including Thunder Bay and Sudbury.

The latter is its current preferred choice.

The Exton location would require some hydro infrastructure upgrades, given the processor's power requirement of 300 megawatts.

Greenstone's plan "has been upgraded with more detailed information and maps related to electricity supply," Beaulieu said.

Wednesday's visit came on the heels of a similar pitch in Cleveland by the City of Thunder Bay.

Thunder Bay Mayor Keith Hobbs said upon his return that if the city's bid is turned down, he would throw his support behind Greenstone's effort.