

Company talks fracking with Corner Brook business leaders

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David Murray, the CEO of Black Spruce Exploration, spoke with reporters after his talk to the members of the greater Corner Brook Board of Trade. (CBC)
The company hired to help get oil out of the ground in western Newfoundland pitched its project to members of the Greater Corner Brook Board of Trade on Wednesday. Black Spruce Exploration wants to use hydraulic fracturing, better known as fracking, to extract oil from shale rock at Shoal Point.

"I say without exaggeration that we are early stage, but 20 years ago so was Hibernia," David Murray, the president and CEO of Black Spruce, told his audience. "It's really a wonderful business opportunity and for most people here in this room, as business people, you can see a positive spinoff come as a result of what goes on in this industry."



Fracking is a technique which injects oil, water and chemicals into wells to draw out oil. (CBC)

Fracking is a technique which involves injecting water, sand and chemicals into wells to help push out the oil. The process is controversial in many jurisdictions, and some European countries and American states have banned it. People who live on the Port au Port Peninsula, where the fracking would take place, say they're not sure they want that sort of oil exploration happening in their backyard. At a public meeting on Sunday in Port au Port East, hundreds of people voiced their opposition to the proposal. Murray told the board of trade members there's no reason to be concerned.

"As far as it being unsafe, that's not true, there is no science to prove those things," said Murray.

"So if you look at what we have experienced here in Canada, we have a very high standard of safety and practice. Again, public information, 200,000 wells, all successful, no problems."

Murray said his company is committed to meeting high environmental standards.

"We want to make sure that we meet and exceed all the requirements there. We have no desire to want to just get by, by the skin of our teeth. We know that industry standard practices are to exceed what usually the minimum government regulation is." Murray said Black Spruce Exploration plans to bring in a drill rig, pipes and supplies to the area in late May or early June.