

## Practicum program helps build career steam



**ALBERTA  
PACIFIC**  
FOREST INDUSTRIES INC



(L to R) Scott Saunders (background) inspects the Alberta-Pacific power boiler bed with Colton Bown and Doug Spafford. -

Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries Inc. (Al-Pac) is assisting youth gain access to a training program which could lead to a career in power engineering.

Colton Bown and Doug Spafford, both students at Edwin Parr High School in Athabasca, Alberta, have nearly completed their first summer in the Power Engineering Pilot Program. Partnering with the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) and CAREERS: The Next Generation, Alberta-Pacific is one of five industrial facilities to provide the opportunity to youth; other partners include ATCO Power Inc., Capital Power/ Epcor, Syncrude and Suncor.

Once selected for the program the Grade 10 or 11 students are placed in the first of a three-summer, eight-week work experience session which gives them more than just background knowledge of power engineering.

At the Alberta-Pacific millsite they had the opportunity to learn about the various job responsibilities of a power engineer while being mentored by team members who run the mill's boiler systems. Bown and Spafford also took part in an introductory lab at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology which simulated the processes of boiler operation.

When the eight-week session is complete, the students will return to school, where in addition to working toward their Grade 12 diploma, they must successfully complete computer-based training credits on power engineering theory. Once they have completed three summers in the program the practicum students have the ability to write their Fourth Class Power Engineering exam.

"It's an opportunity few young men and women get to have while still in high school," says Darrell Rosa, who is mentoring the practicum students. "By giving youth a chance to learn about power engineering at Al-Pac we hope they will consider continuing to work with us once out of school."

Al-Pac is North America's largest single-line kraft pulp mill, producing 650,000 air-dried metric tonnes of bleached hardwood and softwood pulp annually. The company's 455 team members are focused on producing quality pulp for customers around the world and environmental leadership. In 2005, Al-Pac received Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification, a leading standard that embraces social and environmental values along with sound forest management and manufacturing practices.