

# BELARE 2007-2008: FIRST PROGRESS IN UTSTEINEN



A first report was received from Alain Hubert and the building team in Antarctica. Twenty-one people are now on site, working away on the wind turbines and getting started on the station's anchoring points.

Alain Hubert and 8 other people left Cape Town on November 2nd, destination Russian station Novolazarevskaja. From there, they boarded a Basler flight (DC-3 plane) heading for Utsteinen. They landed just 3 kilometres from the construction site and walked the remainder of the way. Their first 36 hours on site were devoted to setting up camp and restoring stored equipment. Riding the Prinoth tractors, Alain Hubert and Philippe Van Den Broeck drove to the coast a first time to fetch wood and fuel that had been stored in a container in Breid Bay during BELARE 2006-2007. On the way, the Hammar side loader sledge got stuck in a small crevasse. A rescue operation is scheduled today (the 12th of November).

After a second trip to the coast, Alain Hubert confirms that the snow route prepared last year is very good, shortening the trip between Utsteinen and Breid Bay by 5 hours! It now only takes 15 hours to travel the approximate 190 km, versus 20 hours before the circuit existed.

The weather is splendid in Utsteinen (21 degrees Celsius in the sun) while the rest of Antarctica is being swept by heavy winds. So much so that the flight scheduled to leave Cape Town on the 7th was delayed until the next day. With twelve new people now on site, the workers number twenty-one. The heavy drilling material has been held in customs in Cape Town and won't be released before November 18th. Work has nonetheless begun on the wind turbines and on preparing the building's site (anchoring points for the

station).