

Italian researchers build climate change observation tower in Arctic

By *Monica Soladay*



Mr. Øyvind Tåsåsen, technical manager at Kings Bay AS.

Former Kings Bay AS Director Oddvar Midtkandal (left) poses with Professor Vito Vitale (center) and Polarnet Unit Manager Dr. Roberto Azzolini (right), both of the National Research Council of Italy, as they lay the foundation peg for Italy's Amundsen-Nobile Climate Change Tower.

Ny-Ålesund, a home to many international research stations in addition to Italy's Amundsen-Nobile Climate Change Tower, is located in Norway's Svalbard Islands.

Despite occasional delays caused by snow, Italian researchers are scheduled to finish construction of a 100-foot-high climate change observation tower in the Arctic by June 2009. Once completed, the tower — which arrived December 11 in 17 pieces that will be assembled on location — will hold instruments for various scientific measurements.

In a nod to Italy's role in Arctic exploration, the structure will be named the Amundsen-Nobile Climate Change Tower after Italian explorer Umberto Nobile and Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen, colleagues who flew over the North Pole together in 1926 in an airplane built by the Italian. Amundsen died two years later while trying to rescue Nobile, who was left stranded during another Arctic trip; Nobile and eight other survivors were

later rescued.

The Amundsen-Nobile tower is located in Norway's community of Ny-Ålesund, the world's most northern settlement, which since 1963 has functioned primarily as an area for polar research. Situated on the Svalbard Islands, Ny-Ålesund houses research stations from 10 nations around the world, including Italy, with a primary focus on environmental and earth science research. The public corporation Kings Bay AS owns the village and surrounding areas, and provides support and services for visiting scientists.

Although Italy's tower will be owned by the National Research Council of Italy (CNR), a public organization, other research stations are welcome to use it in cooperation with the council. ▲