



Minerals North 2008
The Town of Smithers
Box 879
Smithers BC V0J 2N0
www.mineralsnorth.ca



(Smithers February 08, 2008) With just two months until Minerals North 2008, the organizers have developed a program that reads like a Mining 101 course, covering the mining cycle from grassroots to discovery to development through to reclamation. It will use local projects and people to demonstrate the complex cycle. Minerals North 2008 takes place in Smithers from April 16 to 18. The annual conference is an opportunity for the minerals industry to get together with representatives of local communities and First Nations.

In the past, the two-day event has focused on showcasing exploration projects across northern BC. It's been seen as an opportunity for junior exploration companies to launch their new field seasons. Exploration spending in the northwest has sky-rocketed from a mere \$7 million in 2000 to \$170 million in 2007. With that record expenditure, the Minerals North organizers decided to broaden the focus of the 2008 conference.

"We think there is a real appetite among non-industry people to learn more about how that \$170 million was spent," Minerals North 2008 chair Robin Curry says. "We know there is a lot of support for the minerals industry among municipal councils, chambers of commerce and people on the street. We believe we can build on that support by being clearer about the steps that lead to what we all want – the responsible development of new mines in the northwest."

The program will cover how local prospectors carry out grassroots exploration, what is involved in financing a junior exploration company, expeditors who supply exploration camps, assay labs that process samples, mine permitting and ultimate closure. Minerals North will also examine the role of the local communities and First Nations to promote engagement and participation in a sustainable minerals industry.

An all-day workshop leading into the conference will focus on the interaction between First Nations, government and the mineral industry. "Working Together for a Better Future" will be a hands-on workshop in which participants will develop pro-active approaches to address issues arising from mineral exploration and development between First Nations and the Mineral Industry. The aim is to develop common-sense solutions and improved understanding which benefits all parties. Panel discussions with representatives from the Provincial Government, the Mining Industry, and First Nations are also planned.

"This workshop takes the Mining 101 theme a step further," according to Hans Smit, president of Minerals North. "We plan to have northwest representatives of three key entities – the provincial government, industry and First Nations. The relationships between industry and First Nations are instrumental in ensuring First Nations participate fully in all aspects of the mining cycle since First Nation issues are a major consideration when companies look at investing in British Columbia. The focus of the workshop will be on how to work cooperatively to protect First Nation values and interests, increase industry-related economic activity by First Nations and ensure northern British Columbia remains an attractive place to invest for the mineral industry for the benefit of all citizens."



The workshop is open to full delegates to the conference, for an additional fee, however space is limited. For more information on Minerals North 2008, visit www.mineralsnorth.ca or call the Town of Smithers at 250-847-1631.

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