

Richard Neufeld, Minister of Energy and Mines
Mineral Titles Online – Announcement
Vancouver

January 20, 2005

It's good to see everyone here. It's a bit of a rainy day. We had hoped there would be some more media here, but with some of the unfortunate things that are taking place around Vancouver and the Lower Mainland, the media is obviously busy with those issues.

Today is a good day to talk about the launching of Mineral Titles Online. We actually launched it on January 12 and have had some remarkable experience so far with Mineral Titles Online. In fact, as I was told this morning, there have been more hectares put in claims in the first few days of operation than there was in all of last year.

This demonstrates that people and companies are very interested in it, with a split of 80 percent individual claimants and about 15 per cent companies. The rest are seniors and partnerships.

So it's coming together as our people in the ministry thought and as Pat and I hoped it would. We're happy that this process is now in place, and I'm sure the folks at our office are happy too. They've worked very hard over the last couple of years.

I want to take this opportunity now, too, to thank the Chamber of Mines, the B.C. and Yukon Chamber of Mines. Dan, you've been stellar in your support of things that this ministry has tried to do. Your organization, your group and your members certainly are to be thanked for all the hard work that you've done.

I know that we sit around the table and talk about things. We may not always agree on what we talk about, but at the end of the day we at least put it on the table and come out with what we hope are the best options for everyone. It's great to be in your office - thank you very much - to make this announcement today.

Mining has certainly come back in the province of British Columbia in the last number of years. Some of the things that we did, that the Premier did, in the province of British Columbia to encourage mining – it was that drive to bring mining back to what it once was in the province of British Columbia.

Immediately after taking office we initiated quite a few very strategies that have helped and encouraged the industry to invest in British Columbia, to create the private sector jobs in British Columbia and to take advantage of the great geology that we have. We have wonderful geology in the province of British Columbia. The difficulty was getting people to have the confidence – individuals, companies and partnerships – to have the confidence in the province to invest their money here again.

For the industry representatives that are here, I want to thank you for taking up that challenge. That's great. We as a government appreciate it. We've seen the exploration dollars increase dramatically from about \$29 million when we took office in 2001 to in excess of \$130 million this year. I know that next year – at least from all indications – it's going to be better yet. That's good news. That's good news for industry, but it's also good news for British Columbians and it's good news for the government of British Columbia that the economy is taking off, and now we have a great economy in the province.

Certainly, what's transpired in the last little while with the mining industry has helped that economy come rebound. We need those jobs; we need that activity; and above all, we need those resources in our everyday lives. Whether we know it or not, if we didn't have a mining industry we wouldn't have buildings like we are standing in here.

I want to thank Minister Murray who is here today from Management Services. Minister Murray is going to talk a little bit later about how her ministry is involved in this. This is a cross-ministry process.

Now I am going to introduce the Minister of State for Mining, Pat Bell, to come up and explain how to acquire a cell of land, stake a claim unit or hectare of land. It will prove to be interesting.

Pat.