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Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources

B.C.'S THRIVING MINING SECTOR BENEFITS FROM JOB FAIRS

VANCOUVER – The resounding growth in the mineral industry in B.C. has led to a dramatic increase in the demand for jobs, a need that will be addressed by a series of job and career fairs in communities around the province, Minister of State for Mining Bill Bennett announced today.

“The mineral exploration and mining industry has experienced a phenomenal resurgence in the last five years, as seen by the \$220 million invested in exploration alone in 2005,” said Bennett. “The mining sector is now one of the most vibrant areas of job creation in the province. The demand for skilled workers is on the rise, and we want to make sure that we have the people in place to meet this demand.”

The job and career fairs, hosted by the Province, will target communities in resource industry areas. The fairs, scheduled between February and April 2006, will bring exploration and mining companies, educational institutions and employment agencies together with prospective employees and people interested in learning more about mining in their region.

“This is another positive step the government has taken towards supporting the mineral exploration industry in B.C.,” said Dan Jepsen, president and CEO of the Association for Mineral Exploration BC. “There is definitely a need for skilled labour in our industry, and I believe that job fairs and mineral education programs are a perfect example of the new attitude towards our sector in this province.”

The fairs will provide information on job opportunities and career options in the mineral exploration and mining industries and actively promote the participation of First Nations and rural communities. The fairs will also promote awareness of the resource industry’s skills and training requirements and increase public awareness of how mining benefits communities. More than 20 fairs will be held, with individual locations and times available on the ministry website and promoted in advance with local media.

“I think job fairs are a great idea to help our young people find employment, especially in rural areas in the north,” said Smithers Mayor Jim Davidson. “Jobs fairs are a great opportunity for people to gain knowledge about the mining industry that is of interest to them and that they otherwise might not know.”

“The job fairs clearly demonstrate that B.C. is committed to addressing the labour needs of our industry,” said Michael McPhie, president and CEO of the Mining Association of BC. “These workshops will help us get the word out: we are a thriving industry and looking for the people power to move us forward into the next generation of mineral resource development.”

Currently, B.C.'s mining sector employs 25,000 people in over 50 communities. One of B.C.'s great goals is to create more jobs per capita than anywhere else in Canada. Over the next decade, more than 80,000 new jobs will open up in the mining sector across Canada, many of which will be in B.C.

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Media Jake Jacobs
contact: Public Affairs Officer
 Ministry of Energy, Mines and
 Petroleum Resources
 250 952-0628
 250 213-6934 (cell)

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