



BC's MINING UPDATE

Honourable Richard Neufeld

Honourable Pat Bell

Restoring British Columbia's Mining Sector

SEPTEMBER 2004

From the Desk of Pat Bell

I am happy to report that work on the mining plan, promised last spring, is progressing nicely. Ministry staff have worked hard to put together a plan that not only responds to the initial consultations undertaken by the Mining Task Force but which also provides the industry with a great tool to help sell the merits of investing in British Columbia.

Global competitiveness is key to ensuring a thriving mining sector and is a major focus of the plan. Ministry staff are evaluating taxation, fee structures, regulatory burdens and security of investment to ensure BC attracts the exploration and development capital required for mining to grow in this province. All these areas must be constantly reviewed and updated to reflect the rapid rate of change industry experiences world-wide.

Equally important to global competitiveness is confirming the social licence to operate. Communities in BC benefit from investment in their areas. First Nations and other interested stakeholders will be consulted to ensure their concerns are addressed and that they too share in the benefits. These messages are front and centre in our mining plan, which proposes new approaches to addressing the challenges faced by all communities.

Continued: Pat Bell

DRC RESOURCES STRIKES COPPER-GOLD AT AFTON

Executives of DRC Resources Corp. are excited about progress at the Afton copper-gold project outside Kamloops. Drilling beneath the old Afton pit has defined a substantial resource of copper-gold mineralization. The timing of the planned development is excellent; demand from developing countries has pushed gold to \$410.00 an ounce and copper to \$1.30 per pound.

An \$18 million feasibility study began in March that will include digging a 2.3-kilometre decline from the wall of the main Afton pit. Construction of the tunnel and subsequent exploration and engineering studies – expected to take 13 months after an expected October start – will help to map out the shape and size of the ore body.

The company estimates total start-up costs of an underground mine will be \$168 million. This relatively low cost is mostly due to the mine's location. It is near both an existing mine and the city of Kamloops, which can supply much needed infrastructure and skilled labour.

The ministry is pleased to see DRC Resources Corp. working towards reviving this mining camp.



DRC Resources Corp.'s Afton mine near Kamloops, as seen from the air.

Continued: Pat Bell

The mining plan will serve to complete the work of the task force and provide a valuable tool to carry our industry forward. Mining, once BC's second largest industry, can once again become a significant economic engine for our province through achieving global competitiveness and ensuring social licence to operate.

Pat Bell
Minister of State for Mining

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Minister of State for Mining

EXCITING NEW PROGRAM WILL TRAIN MINING APPRENTICES

An innovative training program will help to address expected skill shortages in B.C.'s southeast coal mining industry.

The Mining Apprenticeship Program, a partnership between the Elk Valley Coal Corporation and the College of the Rockies, is designed to increase the number of apprentices in four key trades areas: heavy duty mechanics, welding, electrical and millwright/machinist. Funding from the Ministry of Advanced Education is provided through the Industry Training Authority.

The College of the Rockies' Cranbrook campus will provide the technical training, indenture the apprentices, co-ordinate work placements and administer the program. Elk Valley Mines, and possibly other industrial partners, will provide the workplace for onsite industrial experience.

The program will enable students to acquire necessary qualifications before applying for work and will ensure that highly-trained applicants are available to employers.

Courses for heavy duty mechanics will start in October; classes for the other three trades are slated to begin in spring 2005.

Mining companies interested in participating in the Mining Apprenticeship Program are invited to contact Heather Schneider, Dean of Instruction and Development, College of the Rockies at (250) 489-8286.



Attracting young people – like this welding student at the College of the Rockies – to careers in mining is one of the goals of BC's Mining Apprenticeship Program.