

Innovation council crafts strategy

■ Canada gets serious about mining innovation

BY HEIDI ULRICHSEN

About 10 years ago, the federal government in Australia made mining and other resource development research a national priority. Since then, the country has emerged as a leader in mining research.

"The Australians built on and strengthened some key public and private sector mechanisms to advance mining research and technology development," said Stephen Lucas, assistant deputy minister of the mines and minerals sector at Natural Resources Canada.

"They established mechanisms such as collaborative research centres to advance research as well as teaching students."

If Lucas gets his way, Canada will soon catch up to Australia in its capacity to engage in world-class mining research.

He is on the transition board of the Canadian Mining Innovation Council (CMIC), a newly-formed entity which would partly act as an umbrella organization for various mining research centres across the country.

The transition board for CMIC, which is made up of representatives of universities, mining research organizations, governments and industry from across the country, includes three people with connections to Northern Ontario.

Included on the transition board are Parviz Farsangi, executive vice-president and chief operating officer of Vale Inco, Christine Kaszycki, assistant deputy minister

for the mines and minerals division of the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, and Peter Kaiser, director of the Sudbury-based Centre for Excellence in Mining Innovation (CEMI).

The origins of the council can be traced to discussions last year between stakeholders who were concerned about the state of mining research in the country, said Lucas.

A proposal to start CMIC was presented at a meeting of provincial and territorial mines ministers in September 2007.

The council's transition board is currently engaged in a series of regional workshops, out of which a research and innovation strategy will soon be developed.

This research strategy will be presented to mines ministers at their next conference, scheduled to take place in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan in September 2008, Lucas said.

The CMIC will likely be ready to choose a permanent board of directors and start performing its role in late 2008 or early 2009. The council will be jointly supported by Natural Resources Canada and the Canadian Institute of Mining, Metallurgy and Petroleum (CIM), he said.

There are currently several mining research centres across the country, including CEMI in Sudbury, but they tend to operate in silos, said Lucas. This situation has resulted in many missed opportunities, he said.



Stephen Lucas, assistant deputy minister of the mines and minerals sector at Natural Resources Canada.

"If the communication and generation of opportunities for collaboration between these centres is too low, then you run the risk of not having sufficient research capabilities or a critical mass to address some key problems. There is potential for overlap and duplication of efforts."

It's true that mining supply and service companies already produce innovative new technology for mining operations, but with the help of increased government funding and a co-ordinated strategy, more and better technology could be developed, Lucas said.

"It's not that the industry isn't innovative and technologically advanced. But is Canada and industry capturing the full benefits of this present and future hunger

for technology and process innovation in the sector?" CEMI and Northern Ontario have a large part to play in the new council and will benefit from working in collaboration with other mining research centres, he said.

Alex Henderson, manager of business planning and mines technical services with Vale Inco's Sudbury operations, said the council has been sorely needed for a long time.

"Canada has a good brand in terms of mining and mining innovation. But over the last 10 or 15 years, we've slipped relative to some of the other countries

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like Australia, Sweden or South Africa," he said.

"A lot of it is that we're very disjointed in our approach. We're not as focused as we need to be."

Canadian research centres should work together to decide which projects each centre should do, thus preventing duplicated work, he said. They should also share technology that has already been developed to further each other's projects, said Henderson.

Vale Inco is especially interested in seeing researchers develop deep mining technology, Henderson said. In 2006, the company contributed \$5 million to CEMI to push forward deep mining projects, along with other research initiatives.

Xstrata Nickel contributed \$5 million to CEMI, and the provincial government \$10 million. A contribution from the federal government has not yet been announced.

"From a technical perspective, our mines are getting deeper. There are significant technical challenges related to mining deeper," he said. "Ventilation, ground control, and even logistics for the movement of ore, men and materials are problems."

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Canadian Mining Hall of Fame calls for nominations

The Canadian Mining Hall of Fame has issued its yearly call for nominations.

Nominations of persons who have demonstrated outstanding lifetime achievements to the benefit of the Canadian minerals industry may be made by individuals, firms and organizations.

Nominations must be channeled through sponsors or associate sponsors of the Canadian Mining Hall of Fame.

Sponsors include the Canadian Institute of Mining Metallurgy and Petroleum, the Mining Association of Canada, The Northern Miner and the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada.

Associate sponsors include the British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec and Saskatchewan mining associations and the Association for Mineral Exploration British Columbia.

The deadline for the sponsoring organization to submit nominations is July 18, 2008.

Individuals will be inducted into the hall of fame in January 2009.

The hall of fame currently features its inductees at two locations, one in the University of Toronto's Mining Building, and the other in the Mining Museum in

the Lester B. Pearson Civic Centre in Elliot Lake.

In December 2008, a new multimedia exhibit featuring the hall of fame will be opening at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. For more information, phone (519) 599-3050

Edmunds appointed Atlas Copco vice-president

Peter Edmunds of Sudbury has been named vice-president, global strategic customers at Atlas Copco.

Edmunds has held various international positions within the Atlas Copco Group, including mining division manager in Great Britain and managing director in Namibia and Botswana before returning to Canada in 1993. Edmunds' role will be to communicate and implement global strategy for the company.

Mining Industry Human Resources Council appoints new executive director

Ryan Montpellier has been appointed executive director of the Mining Industry Human Resources Council (MiHR).

Montpellier has been with the council since February 2004. Prior to his

appointment as executive director, he held the position of director of operations.

He has played an active role on the management team, overseeing several labour market research studies, communications and marketing initiatives, and the seminal "Prospecting the Future" sector study.

Montpellier replaces Paul Hebert, who has been appointed executive director of the Federated School of Mines in Sudbury.

Vale Inco appoints new vice-president of sustainability and business services

John Pollesel has been appointed Vale Inco's new vice-president of sustainability and business services.

Pollesel began his career with Falconbridge in 1989 and held senior positions within the organization both nationally and internationally, including manager, business services for Sudbury Mines/Mill and Raglan operations.

For the past five years, he has participated in the development and growth of Compania Minera Antamina in Peru, where he held the position of vice-president, finance and CFO.

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