

Yukon College: Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining

Context

Yukon’s mining industry is rapidly growing with three working mines and several more expected to come on stream in the next five years. These mines need local, committed, and qualified workers who are safety conscious and have a long-term interest in working in the mining industry. In response to the growing demand for a skilled work force, the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining (CNIM) was established. CNIM delivers training and educational programming in partnership with industry and communities, and also facilitates access to applied research specific to the northern minerals and mining industry.

Pre-exploration	Exploration	Development	Operation	Closure	Post-closure
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Leads: Government, industry, and community (Yukon)

Steps of the Mineral Development Sequence:
Exploration, development, operation

Key Finding: Delivering training programs in partnership with industry, communities, and educational institutions is the key to high employment success rates for program graduates. A collaborative model of training that includes methods/components that are culturally relevant, delivered in the local communities or at the mine sites, is also important for retaining students in the programs.

CNIM offers dedicated trades facilities at the Yukon College Ayamdigut Campus in Whitehorse and is assembling a mobile trade school, making comprehensive trades training possible anywhere in Yukon that is accessible by road. Training is available through scheduled program delivery or through customized contract training. Mineral companies are welcome to inquire about accessing CNIM’s two mine training simulators that are capable of accommodating surface and underground training modules.

Also housed in CNIM are the well-established construction apprenticeship trades, including carpentry, electrical, and oil burner mechanic. CNIM is planning to offer heavy equipment operator, underground mining, pre-apprenticeship heavy equipment mechanic, industrial electrical, and industrial welding programs.

Description of Measures Implemented

To date, CNIM has delivered successful programs in collaboration with industry and communities that resulted in graduates obtaining employment in a related field. One example of this type of program is the Introduction to Mining Operations program. Through a combination of classroom and on-the-job training at Yukon College and in the three operational mines, this 44-day program orients students to the working environment in a producing mine and provides an avenue for students to secure entry-level employment in the mines.

Results

Although CNIM has just recently confirmed its funding for the next five years, the Centre is expected to contribute to the economic viability of Yukon’s industry by cultivating a skilled work force within the territory through comprehensive skills and trades training. Such training offers Yukon residents, and those wanting to live and work in Yukon, access to a variety of training opportunities that are nationally recognized and uniquely customized for the North. They aim to help build community capacity for participation in future projects, hence fostering community readiness.

In December 2012, CNIM signed an agreement with the University of Alaska allowing both parties to exchange faculty, curriculum, and students, and linking the mineral resource technologist program at CNIM directly to the mine engineering program at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. The first wave of mining students graduated from CNIM in March 2013.

Lessons Learned

It has been demonstrated that delivering training programs in partnership with industry, community, and educational institutions is the key to high employment success rates for program graduates. This collaborative model of training, delivered in the community or at the mine site, is also important for retaining students in the programs.

For more information:

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