



NEWS RELEASE

NWT Diamond Mines Celebrate Milestones

(Yellowknife, NT – August 24, 2018) The Northwest Territories (NWT) diamond mining industry celebrated two milestones this month, milestones gratefully acknowledged by northern government, Indigenous and industry leaders.

On August 9, Dominion Diamonds celebrated the 20th year of diamond mining at Ekati, the first diamond mine to have opened in Canada in 1998. An unexpected and initially unbelievably discovery of diamonds by geologists Chuck Fipke and Stu Blusson in 1991 proved that the ground they staked held significant deposits of jewellery grade diamonds. In partnership with a major global mining corporation BHP-Billiton, they would see the new Ekati mine approved, constructed and producing high quality diamonds a short seven years later. The mine is owned and operated today by the Washington Group.

Just a short 30 kilometres to the south, Diavik Diamond Mines Inc. celebrated the start of mining of their fourth orebody, named A21 on August 20. The planned US\$350 million project was completed ahead of schedule and under budget. Mining and diamond production is expected to reach full production in Q4 2018. As with Diavik's other three ore bodies, A21 was discovered under the large lake, Lac de Gras, and required the construction of a highly engineered dike to allow open pit mining. Diavik's dike design received Canada's top engineering award as a Canadian engineering achievement for its significant positive impact on society, industry or engineering. The Diavik mine is operated today by Rio Tinto plc which owns 60% of the mine, with the Washington Group owning 40%.

Leaders and representatives of the NWT Government and from the Indigenous groups that traditionally used the area participated in and helped celebrate the events at Ekati and Diavik.

In September, the NWT's newest diamond mine – Gahcho Kué – will celebrate its second anniversary. In that short time, the mine has set production records, hired over half of its workforce from the north with one third Indigenous, and this year has already spent \$142.6 million with NWT businesses. The mine is operated by De Beers (51% ownership) and Mountain Province Diamonds (49%).

"The Ekati and Diavik mines are world class operations and have helped put Canada on the map as the third most valuable diamond producer in the world," said Gary Vivian, President of the NWT & Nunavut Chamber of Mines. "Most importantly, along with our third diamond mine Gahcho Kué, they operate to the highest of environmental standards, they continue to create significant socio-economic benefits for the north, and are also leaders in Indigenous reconciliation."

Since 1996 when construction of Ekati began, all the NWT diamond mines have created significant economic benefits for Canada and for the North. These include:

- Over 58,000 person years of employment for Canada, with half northern and half of that Indigenous; and
- \$20 billion in spending, of which nearly \$14 billion is northern, and \$6 billion Indigenous.

For more information on the NWT and Nunavut mining industries, please visit the website at www.miningnorth.com or contact Tom Hoefer, Executive Director at Tel: 867-873-5281 or email: executivedirector@miningnorth.com.