



News Release

2024 Mining & Exploration (MAX) Awards Presented

Yellowknife, NT (December 9, 2024) The 2024 Mining and Exploration (MAX) awards were presented to recipients at a banquet on November 28, wrapping up the annual Yellowknife Geoscience Forum. The awards and recipients are below, with additional details in the Backgrounder, appended. (Two awards from 2023 were presented as recipients weren't available at the time.)

- Economic Leadership award – 2023 Brad Mapes
- Indigenous Achievement Award 2023 – April Desjarlais
- Distinguished Service Award – Dr. Mike Stubley
- Honorary Achievement Award – Angela Balsillie
- Economic Leadership Award 2024 – Tłıchq Investment Corporation
- Environmental, Social & Governance Award – Diavik Diamond Mine
- Indigenous Achievement 2024 – Darcy Sinclair
- Special Achievement Award – Adam Bembridge
- Women in Mining NT Award – Kelly Brenton
- WSCC Safety Award – David English
- Mining Reclamation Outstanding Achievement Award – De Beers Canada Snap Lake Closure

A highlight of the evening was a charity auction to raise money for the Yellowknife Adopt a Family Program. Auctioneer Wally Schumann successfully coaxed over \$33,000 to support families in need in the Northwest Territories this holiday season! A unique diamond pendant, featuring diamonds donated by each of the Diavik, Ekati, and Gahcho Kué operating mines was the highlight, raising \$17,500.

Closing the evening, newly appointed Honorary Member of the NWT & Nunavut Chamber of Mines Tom Hoefer, was recognized for his 20 years service managing the industry association.

For additional information on the awards including photos, visit the [NWT MAX Awards](#) website.

For more information on the NWT and Nunavut mining industries, please visit the NWT & Nunavut Chamber of Mines website at www.miningnorth.com or contact Karen Costello, Executive Director at Tel: 867-873-5281 or email: karen.costello@miningnorth.com.

Attachment: *Backgrounder with Details of Award Recipients*

Backgrounder with Details of Award Recipient

Award	Recipients
Economic Leadership 2023	Brad Mapes , long-time Hay River businessman, and founder, President & CEO of AWP Industries Corp, has constructed the first and only rail transloading facility at Enterprise, NWT. This now provides mining clients and others with direct access to the North American Rail system, with competitive freight haul costs both into and out of the Northwest Territories. It is one of the most important and strategic – and newest – logistics facilities serving the NWT and its mining sector today.
Indigenous Achievement 2023	April Desjarlais is a Yellowknife-based business owner. Her contributions began initially with Expedite North, a company that provided winter road and other logistics support to the mines. Today, she heads Khione Resources a northern recruitment company “ <i>committed to providing exceptional work opportunities for their employees and remarkable service to their clients.</i> ” For more than 14 years, April and her Khione team have been an important workforce provider on several mine sites including Snap Lake and Gahcho Kué.
Distinguished Service	The late Dr. Michael Stuble y was a superb geologist, and spent much of his geology career exploring and mapping the mineral-rich Slave Geological Province, a 2.7-billion-year-old terrane that straddles both the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. Just within the NWT Geological Survey’s publication database alone, one can find his name on 26 Slave Province publications, the vast majority of them on projects Mike led. As written by Mike’s wife Heather and daughters Nicole and Samantha: <i>Those who spent time in the field with Mike are undoubtedly aware of his insatiable curiosity, his sense of adventure, and his great passion for geology and all things in ‘the great outdoors’. He truly loved everything about his bush life, including the close friendships he developed there.</i> ”
Honorary Achievement	Angela Balsillie is an ardent community ambassador, with her hallmark smiling face and willingness to take on virtually any challenge asked of her. With a 35-year career in government, Angie has been invaluable in assisting communities and companies with oil & gas and mineral development. She continues this work today leading the Client Service and Community Relations unit. A clear symbol of her community relationships arose in an unlikely place, when the 2023 forest fire evacuation saw the closure of key airports supplying community residents with essential goods. Angie received unexpected calls for help from community residents who didn’t know who else to turn to. Her colleagues perhaps best described her: “ <i>Her buoyant, compassionate, respectful and always helpful personality combines the attributes of magician, multi-tasker, team builder, mother hen, and true leader with a strong ‘get ‘er done’ attitude.</i> ”
Economic Leadership 2024	Tłıchq Investment Corporation , or TIC, stands out in the NWT’s mining industry for its commitment to meaningful employment and overall capacity building. With a strong foundation servicing the diamond mines, TIC works in partnerships with other organizations to complete infrastructure, construction, mining contracts, and other projects. Most recently, TIC contributed to the successful installation of the largest northern solar facility at the Diavik Diamond Mine site. TIC continues to apply its skills and capacity gained from mining to work outside of the resource sector, including the Behchoko Cultural Centre and the Tłıchq All-Season Road to Whatı. As it continues to develop its capacity to deliver multiple projects both inside and beyond the Tłıchq region, today the majority of its 400-plus work force lives and works in the NWT and are Tłıchq citizens.

Environmental, Social & Governance	<p>Diavik Diamond Mine doubled down on its new mantra “Closing Responsibly, Closing with Care” with actions and investments that will set the bar for environmental and social responsibility even as it prepares to cease operations. Notable initiatives this year (in addition to other community contributions) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with partners, Diavik installed an aerator in Yellowknife’s Frame Lake in June 2024 with the intention of improving water conditions and reintroducing fish to the lake in coming years. • This summer, Diavik installed and activated a 6,600-panel solar power plant on its mine site. It will generate approximately 4.2 million kilowatt-hours of electricity, contribute about 25% of the needed power during closure, and will cut diesel use on site by one million litres per year reducing emissions by 2,900 tonnes of CO2 annually. It is the largest off-grid solar energy project in Canada’s territories. • Diavik led the launch of the Yellowknife Community Foundation’s new Northern Legacy Fund with their initial commitment this year of \$325,000. The Fund will raise \$3 million before disbursing \$125,000 annually in grants to community projects and non-profit organizations across the Northwest Territories in perpetuity. As the fund’s lead sponsor, Diavik committed to fundraising efforts over its remaining years.
Indigenous Achievement 2024	<p>Darcy Sinclair works at the Gahcho Kué mine as the Mobile Maintenance Superintendent, a position he has achieved from similar work at Ekati and Diavik diamond mines. For a quarter of a century, diamond mining has allowed him to practice his trade as an automotive and heavy equipment technician and also remain in his home NWT community of Fort Smith. He is a tireless champion of the NWT and a mentor to younger workers, including serving on the board of Skills Canada NWT, judging in numerous Territorial Skills Competitions. Darcy is currently featured in an international campaign advocating the benefits of natural diamonds.</p>
Special Achievement	<p>Adam Bembridge has been part of the business and social fabric of Yellowknife and the north for over 40 years. One of three founders of Great Slave Helicopters in 1984, Adam was a driving force behind growing this company to over 80 owned and leased machines working worldwide and, importantly, providing significant benefits to the communities of the north along with the mining community. Most recently, Adam created a new opportunity starting Acasta Heliflight in Yellowknife. Examples of his commitment to the north include the Children’s Wish Foundation “Flights for Dreams” annual ball which, over a 10-year period raised over \$1 Million using a hangar into the premier ballroom in Yellowknife. This year, Adam provided his hangar for closing ceremonies for the 12th International Kimberlite Conference.</p>
Women in Mining NT	<p>Kelly Brenton has worked in the mining industry for 25 years, and her list of accomplishments is long and impressive. Most of all, Kelly’s contributions have been life-changing for the people she has impacted. Recent highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2019, Kelly helped secure \$250,000 from the Anglo American Foundation toward a \$1 million renovation at the Yellowknife Women’s Centre. • In 2020, Kelly and her team engaged with contractor partners from Gahcho Kué to secure \$51,500 in donations to help AVENS purchase a new bus for its senior’s centre. • Also, in 2020, Kelly was integral in securing funding from the Anglo American Foundation, this time for the purchase of 300 laptops that were distributed to schools in Yellowknife and surrounding communities to allow online learning to continue during the COVID-19 pandemic.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2021, Kelly worked with mines, volunteers, and the Copperhouse Restaurant in Yellowknife to provide a special Thanksgiving Dinner for health care staff in Yellowknife who, to address COVID, were hard at work over the Thanksgiving weekend and couldn't be with their families. • In 2022, she helped launch the Baby Bundle Program, a partnership with the GNWT's Department of Health and Social Services that has, so far, seen 1,600 bundles of baby essentials provided to new mothers who need it. • In 2023, Kelly was key in securing a \$250,000 grant from the Anglo American Foundation to the United Way Emergency Fund that supported residents during and after the forest fire evacuation of much of the NWT.
WSCC Safety	<p>David English, the Health and Safety Superintendent from Burgundy Diamond Mines, played a pivotal role in ensuring the success of the 2024 NWT/NU Mine Rescue Competition held in Yellowknife in June. His leadership focused on fostering collaboration and relationship-building among participating teams, which included mines from the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and even the United States. By emphasizing the importance of mutual aid and community support, Dave helped create a robust and cooperative environment that not only enhanced the competition but also strengthened ties within the mining industry. His efforts ensured that the event was not only a showcase of emergency response skills but also a celebration of teamwork and community spirit.</p>
Mining Reclamation Outstanding Achievement	<p>De Beers Group has made their Snap Lake diamond mine the first in the NWT to complete the full mining cycle from development to operations and now, to closure and reclamation. The Snap Lake deposit was discovered in 1996 and De Beers purchased the property in 2000. The Snap Lake mine opened 8 years later as Canada's only completely underground diamond mine. Mining ceased in late 2015 , and by 2017, De Beers had flooded the underground workings and put the site under care and maintenance.</p> <p>The final closure and reclamation plan was developed in partnership with the Snap Lake Environmental Monitoring Agency and local Indigenous communities and in consultation with regulatory agencies. The Met/NUNA joint venture between Nuna Logistics and the North Slave Métis Alliance received the contract to remediate the site, beginning early 2022. In fall 2023, local Indigenous communities were hired to harvest seeds to grow more than 2,000 native shrubs which were planted on the site in summer 2024. The remediation work was wrapped up at the end of October 2024, a little over two years after Met/NUNA received their contract.</p>