

## Mining Our Resources

# Geoscience Forum busts attendance record

By Ryan Silke

NWT & Nunavut Chamber of Mines

Once a year in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, the city witnesses a great influx of prospectors, geologists, engineers, and mining executives. No, it's not a staking rush. They descend on the community not in a wild search for rocks and minerals, but rather in the spirit of insight, knowledge and cooperation. It is the annual Geoscience Forum, a large conference that brings the mining and exploration industry of the NWT and Nunavut together to discuss and promote new mineral projects, share research, and undertake new initiatives.

The Geoscience Forum is 35 years

old now with a long history of promoting the benefits of mining. Here in the north, where mining contributes over half of our economy and was the reason why the modern north exists at all, it is a very important part of life. We are well known for our famous diamond mines, but these are not the only minerals currently being explored and developed North of 60. Lead, zinc, gold, uranium, tungsten, rare earth metals... these are just some of the minerals that mining companies are looking for in the north.

Geoscience, which is held during the third week of November, is a chance for the industry to catch up on what the major mining projects are, what new ores are being discovered and where, what new technology is being developed, and what kind of issues the north is facing. The Forum is divided into two parts, a conference with three days worth of technical talks, and a trade show, where businesses and organizations can promote themselves. The Forum is not restricted just to the mining industry. Hundreds of service companies, from construction, supply, aviation, and catering, all rely on the mining industry for business. You can find many of them at the trade show booths, giving business a chance for promotion and mining companies a chance to meet new potential contractors.

Governments and other organizations also promote themselves at the Geoscience Forum trade show. Mining regulations in the north are sometimes very confusing because of various levels of government and stringent environ-

regions subjected to climate change. The diamond session looked at the number of upcoming diamond projects in Nunavut; the consultation session addressed the need for mining companies to consult with Aboriginal groups, and the outreach session focused on educational initiatives in the mining industry.

It wasn't all business at the Geoscience Forum. Several social functions were hosted at the Top Knight Pub and De Beers Canada Inc. sponsored the 2nd annual Gala event at the Explorer Hotel, which featured a sit down dinner, and a live and silent auction which



mental laws, so these organizations are available to answer questions and address concerns.

The technical talks are always well attended and are the focus of the conference. This year we had seven sessions: minerals, energy, environment, outreach education, diamonds, and remediation. The minerals session looked at some of our developing mineral projects and government mapping initiatives of the past season. Energy discussed issues in the oil, gas, and geothermal energy sectors, including the potential for geothermal energy in Canada and the Yellowknife area specifically. The environment, always a big topic in the north, was examined during a days worth of talks as was remediation, which included a half day panel discussing reclamation in permafrost

raised nearly \$40,000 for the Nunavut Literacy Council.

The 2007 Geoscience Forum attracted 893 delegates, the largest attendance yet. Every year the event grows in size which is indicative of the growing importance of mining and exploration in the NWT and Nunavut. But a conference this size would not be possible without the aid of sponsors and the work of our dedicated groups of volunteers. Planning for next year's event, which will be held on November 18-20, 2008 in Yellowknife, is already underway, and we hope that you will be able to join us! ▲

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