

Northern geology maintains attractiveness

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Yellowknife's Geoscience Forum is over after a busy week of talks about geology, mineral exploration, and all the issues that surround the mineral industry in the Canadian north. The event was held November 18-20, 2008 and is now in its 36th year. The conference has been growing in the past eight years and even with the current economic downturn, we were pleased with attendance and delegate enthusiasm as we continue to promote the NWT and Nunavut's immense mineral potential.



We had 840 delegates register for the conference this year, down only slightly from last year's conference. The talks were well attended and everybody, from speakers, delegates, organizers, and exhibitors, were in good spirits. Organizing the biggest conference North of 60 is not without challenges, especially with events divided between two venues, but our volunteers pulled it off, and we extend a great thanks to the committee that continues to put on a great show.

It would not be possible without our many sponsors as well and we appreciate their help through in-kind services, donation of auction items, or direct funding. Over 90% of the cost of hosting the conference was paid directly to Yellowknife businesses. Over \$150,000 went for advertising, printing, catering, facility and equipment rental, transportation and other services. It paid over \$10,000 to local non-profits, including St. Pat's Students Against Drunk Driving and the Yellowknife Seniors Society. The Geoscience Gala charity auction raised about \$15,000 for the NWT Mining Heritage Society and the Northern Youth Abroad program.

The NWT Geoscience Office staff organized a very diverse technical program. Sessions included mineral exploration updates, energy, environment, outreach education, diamonds, and remediation. Dr. Mark Hannington of the University of Ottawa gave a special talk on ocean-floor volcanoes and mineral potential in hydrothermal vents. Geology students and summer field programs were also given the opportunity to showcase their research through poster displays during the technical program.

The mining business is about to go through a turbulent period as market uncertainty has led to lower commodity prices and a downturn in investment for exploration. Yet we are confident that our resource potential will continue to attract interest from across the world. Planning for next year's event is already underway and we hope you will be encouraged to join us yet again!