



## IN MEMORIAM

### North loses mining and ice road icon, John Zigarlick

It was with heavy heart that we heard of the sudden passing of John Zigarlick, a well known mining man in our part of northern Canada. While John's mining roots go way back to Uranium City in Saskatchewan, he is most familiar to us for his work on the now famous Tibbitt to Contwoyto ice road.

The road's roots go back to John's time managing the Echo Bay silver mine at Great Bear Lake which was supplied by air and by the famous Denison winter road. As that mine ran out of ore, John and his team found a promising gold deposit, unfortunately challenged by its remote location in the Arctic barrenlands.

By applying his winter road and air resupply experience, John was able to eventually build the Lupin mine by air, using a Hercules and Convair aircraft. (In time, he would add Twin Otters, Beaver and a Boeing 737 to his company fleet.) To keep the mine operating he took the bold step to build a winter road from Lupin to connect with the highway near Yellowknife, a particularly challenging feat when 75% of the road's 568 kilometres is built over lake ice – the longest ice road in the world.

John's initial success saw the road support under 1,000 truckloads yearly to service Lupin, which became one of Canada's top gold mines, capturing the interest of The New York Times. It wrote in 1987: "The success of Lupin has given a boost to the flagging mineral investment in the Northwest Territories, where legend and hope have traditionally outrun economic development." In his 21 years with the company, John saw Echo Bay Mines grow from a net worth of \$7 million in 1979, to a corporation with a market capitalization of \$2 billion.

John left Echo Bay Mines in the late 1990s to form Nuna Logistics, a new partnership with the Inuit of the Kitikmeot Region. Under John's guidance, Nuna took over the annual construction of his old Lupin ice road which was now ramping up to service three diamond mines. With solid engineering and safety considerations, he increased the road capacity to reach nearly 11,000 truckloads in a single year, a phenomenal feat considering its humble roots. Under his guidance too, Nuna has grown to become one of the best known frontier development companies in Canada.

John's achievements were recognized. In 1984, he was named *Mining Man of the Year* by the Northern Miner newspaper. In 1985, he received the *Distinguished Service Award* of the Prospectors and Developers Association. In 2006, the Transportation Association of Canada gave John their *Award of Achievement* for the development of the Tibbitt to Contwoyto Winter Road.

John was truly a visionary who was able to get the job done. We will miss him.

A celebration of John's life will be held in the New Year where family, friends and business associates can come together and pay respects to John.

*Yellowknife, NT – December 28, 2011*