

Promotion and Investment Attraction

Currently government focuses on attracting potential natural resource investment through international trade shows like Team Canada, booths at provincial and federal mining conferences or visits to a particular NL project arranged by an individual company or DME. Provincially we have a well established system of regional economic boards [RED Boards] operating throughout this province that are not sufficiently utilized in promotion of mineral exploration opportunities. There is some ad hoc promotion; for example several oil and gas symposiums have been held in western NL over the last several years but there is no concerted approach to highlight local, regional or provincial opportunities other than those mentioned previously.

Dept. of Natural Resources, working with junior exploration companies, prospectors etc. should devise ways to utilize the RED Board resource more fully. Maybe local mining fairs, information sessions on particular investment opportunities etc. made to potential local investors would be an excellent place to start. RED Boards would spearhead those sessions. Traditionally it is far easier for junior companies to raise funds out of province. Local awareness promotion may change this trend. There are many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians interested in investment opportunities; knowledge about an investment opportunity is the first requirement when doing due diligence on whether to invest or not in a particular venture. These sessions could be called “NL mineral investment opportunities” with Natural Resources and other government agencies/departments present as a source of data information i.e. claims held by a particular company; investment and income tax benefits; environmental information etc. Exploration companies would highlight their properties and discuss possible investment opportunities with people.

Regulations and Legislation

The Department of Mines, College of North Atlantic, Department of Education and interested groups and individuals have worked collaboratively over the last 21 years to help develop a skilled prospector base for mineral exploration in this province. This movement was spearheaded by people like Baxter Kean, Norm Mercer, Butch Collins, Paul Dean, Larry Hicks and many others in the mineral exploration business during the early 1990's. Programs like the prospectors training program, prospector assistance and others have helped develop this trained prospector base to the point where our prospectors work all over the world. This is a skilled profession.

It is now time for government to recognize this trained workforce by granting a provincial journeyman status for NL prospectors who qualify. The Departments of Natural Resources, Education and HRLE must come together to professionalize this recognized group of NL workers. Larry Hicks has developed a 20 point template of skills required for prospectors to qualify for status. Government departments could use this as a basis to start the process. Advantages of recognizing prospectors are numerous but the main advantages would be in hiring, pay scales, professionalism and proof that prospecting is a skilled trade and that a prospector is a skilled tradesperson.. I would be willing to help in attaining this initiative.

Submitted by Len Muise

April 6, 2011