

Mining New Opportunities by video

Members of First Nations are the target audience for a video specifically designed to raise awareness about career and entrepreneurial opportunities in the mining industry. The 14-minute-long video, titled "Mining New Opportunities," made its English-language debut in late February 2004 in North Bay, Ont., and at the World Mines Ministries Forum in Toronto in March.

The film demonstrates the operation of a mine and rehabilitation of a mine site and provides information on employment and potential partnership opportunities for First Nations people. It also includes interviews with First Nations residents currently employed in the minerals industry. Parts of the film were shot on location at Placer Dome/Kinross Gold's Musselwhite gold mine in northwest Ontario.

The Ontario Mining Association (OMA) played a large role in the video's production. OMA's manager of communications, Peter McBride, says the film aims to promote greater participation in the social and economic benefits of responsible mineral development, and to encourage a better understanding and communication with First Nations people with respect to the purpose and value of exploration and mining. The OMA task force dealing with this initiative, led by Patricia Dillon of Teck Cominco, has developed a comprehensive education package and teaching kit to accompany the video.

Visits to First Nations communities in Northern Ontario revealed that resources were needed to help explain the role of government in mineral development, the nature of exploration, mine development, operation and closure activities and opportunities for First Nation peoples to participate in and benefit from responsible mineral development.

Big Soul Productions, a 100%-aboriginal-owned and -operated production company, produced the film, which has been translated into five languages--Cree, Oji-Cree, Ojibway, French and English.

The OMA provided initial seed funding for the project; additional financial assistance was supplied by FedNor and the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp. The project also benefited significantly from the donation of corporate video footage and technical guidance from other contributing companies.

MNDM and Natural Resources Canada are intending to produce a second video, which will focus on the role of the government and the benefits to communities of mineral development and will reinforce the key messages in the OMA video.