

Fort William hosts mining conference

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Employment opportunities look good in the Treaty 3 area with Treasury Metals' Goliath gold mine set to spin off about 1,000 jobs by late 2015.

"About 200 direct (jobs) and we think there will be about 800 indirect jobs," said Norm Bush, vice president of operations for Treasury Metals. "So the total employment impact should be about 1,000 people."

Bush said the high-grade gold mine, located about 20 kilometres east of Dryden and about two kilometres north of Highway 17, would operate as an open-pit mine for the first three years, a combination open pit and underground mine for the next two years and an underground mine for the remaining mine life of about five to seven years, if no other resources are discovered.

"We don't see any reason not to keep going down once we get into those high grade chutes," Bush said. "Our project is a fairly modest project in size. We would be looking at producing almost 100,000 ounces of gold a year."

Bush said the Goliath mine would cost about \$90 million to build above ground, noting it is close to the Trans-Canada Highway and CPR railway.

"We want this project to be a Dryden project," Bush said. "We want the project to be designed and built and operated and maintained by people in northwestern Ontario. We want to make sure, as much as possible, that we get our labour force from this area, we get our engineering services, our construction services and support services all from this area."

Treasury Metals was one of six mining companies that presented information about their mining projects at the Fort William First Nation Mining Conference, held March 25-26 at the Fort William First Nation Community Centre.

"I'm overwhelmed at the response," said Wally Bannon, Fort William's communication officer about the conference. "We targeted the grassroots levels, the Aboriginals, the women and the youth and we hit it right on the

nose in terms of those people wanting more information about this new economy coming in the future.”

Bannon said his community is also looking for more involvement in the new mining economy.

“We want to be the hub for First Nation communities in northwestern Ontario,” Bannon said.

“We want to look to develop a strategy that includes potentially a mining training centre, potentially housing for students coming to Thunder Bay from the far north (and we’re) looking at becoming an Aboriginal resource centre for mining.”

Fort William’s Craig Morriseau was one of the youth who attended the conference with an interest in working in the mining field.

“I’m going to go to college and try to take a mining course,” said the Grade 12 student. “I like the outdoors and it looks like a nice job.”

Shoal Lake 40’s Faith Redsky is excited about potential employment opportunities in the mining industry.

“I don’t mind doing the heavy work,” said the Grade 10 student. “I’m kind of interested in getting into the actual mines and doing work in there.”

Whitesand’s Kyra Willoughby was interested in the cost of building the mines.

“It actually cost a lot more than I thought it would,” said the Grade 9 student.

Fort William’s Rene Boucher said it is important to provide people with information about potential careers in the mining industry.

“The key is getting that information out to the youth,” said the Fort William First Nation employment and training coordinator, noting that her community is offering a mining strategy training program. “The idea is to really focus on literacy and education. Statistically speaking, we know that First Nations people have a lower percentage of graduation rates than the mainstream so we’re really focusing on that area because we know that in the mining industry you need to have your Grade 12 diploma, you need to have certain levels of math and science.”

Presentations were also made by Webequie Deputy Chief Elsie MacDonald on Women in Mining, Vern Ogima on Aboriginal Involvement in Mining and

Anishinabek Employment and Training Service's John DeGiacomo on Mining Essentials.