

Bridging the commu

Each year, the Ontario Mining Association (OMA) initiates projects designed to bridge the communication gaps between the Ontario government, the mining industry and the general public. Last year was no exception, as the mining association middlemen set many significant projects into motion. **BY TRISHA RICHARDS**

To educate and inform stakeholders of the importance that the Ontario mining industry places on environmental protection, the OMA presented its latest environmental progress report, *Towards Greener Footprints*, in 2004.

The report is also intended to communicate some of the environmental achievements and best practices that have been realized and developed over the years by the mining sector.

The document includes the mining

industry's compliance rate for effluent monitoring and effluent limit regulations in 2002—99.6% for daily concentration parameter samples.

Of the OMA's many endeavours last year, one in particular helped to bring

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

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the mining industry, the Ontario government and all related parties in direct contact. With the assistance of MNDM Minister Rick Bartolucci, the OMA held an informal get-together in March, called 'Meet the Miners', intended to provide the members of the Ontario Legislature and people from various ministries and other organizations involved in mining with an opportunity to meet their industry associates.

"We want wealth creation and growth in our industry for the future... and I believe you, my friends, are the future," Bartolucci told the crowd.

The reception attracted a large crowd of politicians, public servants

and miners to celebrate the industry's contributions to the province. OMA chair Jim Vincent acknowledged the support of Minister Bartolucci, who helped open the doors of Queen's Park for this event. Vincent expressed gratitude for the ministry's support of the 2004 edition of *The Economic and Fiscal Contribution of the Mining Industry in Ontario*. Additionally, he demonstrated that mining is one of the safest sectors in the province—its lost time injury rate improved by 21% to 1.1 per 200,000 hours worked in 2003 compared with 2002, and its total medical aid incidents improved by 7% to 8.4 over the same period.

Opposition critics also had time at the podium. Michael Prue (NDP—Beaches-East York) spoke on behalf of NDP Northern Development & Mines critic Gilles Bisson, and Norm Miller (Progressive Conservative — Parry Sound-Muskoka and Northern Development & Mines critic) also addressed the audience.

Miller demonstrated his support for the industry and nicely summed up the event's theme: "I recognize how important mining is to the whole province," he said to the gathering, "and I want Ontario to have the status as the best place to mine in the world."



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 develop-

ment and will reinforce the key messages in the OMA video.

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