

Energy Minister tours Kirkland Lake Gold

Local News

By RICK OWEN, NORTHERN NEWS

KIRKLAND LAKE - Ontario's Minister of Energy Brad Duguid toured Kirkland Lake Gold Thursday promoting government initiatives that have lowered electricity costs for heavy industrial users and residents.

Kirkland Lake Gold President and CEO Brian Hinchcliffe, KL Gold's Chief Operating Officer Mark Tessier, KL Gold's General Manager Ray Belecque, MPP David Ramsay, Kirkland Lake Mayor Bill Enouy and Kirkland Lake CAO Nancy Allick were on hand to hear what the Minister of Energy presented.

Tessier told the delegation that Kirkland Lake Gold is a unique mining company in that it was formed to mine in Kirkland Lake only and that any energy savings and what ever revenues that are generated will go back into the Kirkland Lake operations.

He at three years ago Kirkland Lake Gold had 234 employees and now there is more than 640 employees and efficiencies are going in the right direction. In terms of energy use, three years prior to this fiscal year energy accounted for \$80 an ounce in costs and with expansion that has dropped to just over \$50 per ounce.

"We are already seeing a lot payback from a lot of long-term investment to make this mine an efficient mine that will be here for many, many, many years to come," said Tessier.

The company is looking at increasing it number of employees to about 900 as the expansion continues. Tessier said the company has had great support from the Ontario government and its ministries.

Duguid said Ramsay worked very hard on getting new policies put in place for energy and in the terms of the long-term energy plan there will be a number of benefits for the North. He said this will be realized through attracting economic development, making energy prices more competitive and attracting more jobs in communities across the North.

The minister thanked the people of Kirkland Lake Gold for believing in Ontario, for investing in Ontario and for working with the ministry to ensure there is a competitive environment to attract investment.

Duguid said in his talks with David Ramsay he was told the people in the area understand the need to move to cleaner energy that results in cleaner air and a healthier environment and the need to develop a modern energy system that is reliable, and will attract investments and jobs.

He at Ontario is a leader in clean energy and through this is creating thousands of jobs and attracting major investments.

Duguid acknowledge that people have been through a challenging economic time time and family budgets are strained and rising energy costs are a challenge to family budget. As a result as Jan. 1 the clean energy benefit comes into effect and provides 10 percent off every energy bill for the next 10 years and this is a recognition that while the government has to make an investment as it builds the strong reliable cleaner energy system that it stands with Ontario families.

The same applies for companies said Duguid, so the government can keep companies like Kirkland Lake Gold investing in Northern Ontario, creating jobs and economic development. To do this the minister said they have worked very closely with industry and came up with programs like the Northern Ontario Electricity Program that is saving many industries up to 25 percent of their energy costs.

As well Duguid said the province has the Energy Conservation Accelerator Program that is providing assistance to industries in fast tracking their investments in conservation and allows them to be more competitive.

During the surface tour of Macassa Mine the minister heard about the many steps Kirkland Lake Gold is doing to modernize, upgrade its equipment to conserve energy and about future plans for future studies on energy efficiency. The mine has done everything from eliminating lights were they weren't needed to installing new more efficient lights to installing modern state of the art high efficiency compressors to developing more efficient storage and heating, as well as many other initiatives.

Duguid said this program gives industry the opportunity to stay as competitive as possible and save money. A new program that starts this year is the Ontario Industry Conservation Initiative. Duguid described this as one of the best programs and will provide industry with incentive to shift use off the

peak times when energy costs the most. He said this idea came from industry and is a win-win situation because it saves the energy system, reduces peak demand, saves every consumer and saves industry money as well.

Duguid said "we are working very closely with industry, particularly in the North ensuring we are providing a competitive environment for that investment."

He he McGuinty government is determined to work with Ontario industries and to work with Northern Ontario families to ensure we have a clean reliable and strong energy system and that same time an affordable energy system that Ontario families can be proud to pass on to our next generations, our kids and our grandkids."

He also praised Ramsay for his support and ensuring that the government is responding to the needs of the North with its energy policy.