

KL Gold continues to drive local economy upward

Local News

By RICK OWEN

One of the best kept secrets in Kirkland Lake continues to grow and bring prosperity not only to Kirkland Lake but to the entire area.

Yes local residents know that Kirkland Lake Gold is moving ahead and producing gold at the Macassa Mine but I don't think most people realize or appreciate the huge impact the mine is having and will have for many years to come.

Thursday I took part in a surface tour of the mine as Provincial Energy Minister Brad Duguid visited the mine. I thought I was fairly well informed about that was happening at the mine but I learned a lot and now have a better picture of what is happening and what will happen in the future.

First off if a mine is to be successful the gold must be there and it must be profitable to mine and mill it. Since coming into town as Foxpoint and then changing the name to Kirkland Lake Gold the company has invested millions and millions of dollars in the project. This has brought results that include major new high-grade gold discoveries and entire new areas to find gold on a property that many had written off.

But what really impressed me when I toured the mine was when Kirkland Lake Gold's Chief Operating Officer Mark Tessier said Kirkland Lake Gold is a unique mining company in that its only mandate is to mine in Kirkland Lake. That all the revenue generated at the company's Kirkland Lake properties is to be reinvested in Kirkland Lake. This certainly goes against the industry norm.

At first the company had to spend millions of dollars on dewatering the mine, rehabilitation of both underground and surface facilities and then millions of dollars on exploration and now million more on expansion and modernization.

The project has hit its share of bumps in the road as the various phases took place but the spirit, the belief in the project, the investment money and the hiring of experts in every aspect of the mine never stopped.

Not only did this continue but all you have to do is listen to people like Tessier talk about the project and you can't help but pick up on the excitement that this is truly a very large and special mine.

For years I have seen Kirkland Lake take a back seat to other mining camps such as Timmins and Red Lake. Companies that had projects in the Larder Lake Mining Division and the Kirkland Lake area would reference their projects back to Timmins instead of Kirkland Lake. The assumption was more potential investors knew the Timmins Camp than were familiar with the Kirkland Lake Camp.

I can see that changing in the near future. When Kirkland Lake Gold discovered gold carrying structures that ran north/south instead of the traditional east/west, almost every junior in the camp started promoting exploration for new north/south gold bearing structures.

The enthusiasm of Kirkland Lake Gold's Chairman Harry Dobson and its President and CEO Brian Hinchcliffe has been contagious and the rest of the management team and investors have bought into it. They are starting to see tangible financial results.

Now with the many, many new high-grade gold discoveries and a huge parcel of land still waiting to be explored the current 18-year mine life at Macassa seems grossly underestimated.

Tessier and the rest of the management at Kirkland Lake Gold are looking at coming up with resources and development that will sustain gold production at Macassa not only past the 18 years but one that will continue with the next generation of miners.

Yes Macassa Mine is a labour intense operation but Kirkland Lake Gold is sparing no money is purchasing the best, most efficient state of the art equipment to reduce costs to compensate for the increased labour costs.

The foresight and investment being made by Kirkland Lake Gold and the positive attitude by management I believe will result in one of the largest, highest-grade and longest lasting mines in Canada. This will bode well for Kirkland Lake in particular and the whole area, for many, many years to come.