



The Canadian Zinc Corporation signed a socio-economic agreement with the territorial government on Aug. 22. Present at the signing were, from left, Jackson Lafferty, the minister of Education, Culture and Employment; Bob McLeod the minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment; John Kearney, the chairman of the Canadian Zinc Corporation; Alan Taylor, the company's vice-president of exploration; Nahendeh MLA Kevin Menicoche; Liidlii Kue First Nation councillor Jonas Antoine and Chief Fred Tesou of the Nahanni Butte Dene Band. - photo courtesy of James Mackenzie

## Prairie Creek mine agreement signed

**Commitments made for employment, training and business opportunities**

**Roxanna Thompson**

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### **SOMBA K'E/YELLOWKNIFE**

The Canadian Zinc Corporation has signed a socio-economic agreement with the territorial government.

The signing ceremony took place in Yellowknife on Aug. 22. The agreement formalizes commitments by Canadian Zinc in areas including employment, training, business opportunities and other related benefits for NWT residents stemming from the Prairie Creek Mine. The agreement also outlines ways in which the company and the territorial government will work together to maximize project opportunities for residents.

"We've always been committed to the North and we feel that the Prairie Creek project offers a lot of benefits to the local communities and to the Northwest Territories," said Alan Taylor, vice-president of exploration with Canadian Zinc.

This agreement further points to the company's commitment to the North, said Taylor. Canadian Zinc has already signed impact benefit agreements (IBAs) with the Nahanni Butte Dene Band and Liidlii Kue First Nation.

The new agreement recognizes and gives priority to the IBAs.

Canadian Zinc had committed during its environmental assessment to reach a socio-economic agreement and approached the territorial government to begin negotiations.

"We recognize that community, local and territorial support are extremely important to the success of any project or economic development in the North," said Taylor.

The agreement should also enhance and expedite the permitting process for the mine, he said.

Peter Vician, the deputy minister for the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, said the biggest benefit of the agreement is the clarity it brings.

The agreement creates a clear understanding of Canadian Zinc's commitments to socio-economic issues including hiring, training and community wellness, said Vician

This is a formal agreement, which means Canadian Zinc has to adhere to it and achieve the objectives. The agreement also provides for a transparent process of regularly reporting on how the agreement is working, he said.

A socio-economic committee that will include representatives from the company, the territorial government and the Nahendeh Aboriginal Economic Council communities will monitor the implementation of the commitments made in the agreement and make recommendations as needed.

Among other things, the agreement defines hiring priorities and employment commitments and practices during the entire life of the mine. Hiring priorities will be given first to members of the Nahanni Butte Dene Band and Liidlii Kue First Nation followed by communities that are members of the Nahendeh Aboriginal Economic Council, including Fort Liard, Trout Lake and Jean Marie River.

In the agreement, Canadian Zinc has committed to having 60 per cent of its workforce, including employment by contractors, be NWT residents. The percentage will be 30 and 75 during the construction and closure phases respectively.

For employees living in the territory, the agreement also includes a commitment to cover the cost of travel to six designated pick-up locations.

The agreement also states that developing qualified workers for the mine is a shared responsibility of the company, its contractors, the territorial government, communities, educational institutions and government agencies.

It goes on to lay out how the company and the territorial government will work with other groups to create training opportunities for residents of the territory.

Bob McLeod, who signed the agreement in his role as the minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, said the agreement shows that the NWT is still a good place for mining companies.

"There are benefits from mining and we take a balanced approach to it," he said.

The Deh Cho places a large amount of importance on the land, water and air and to be able to recognize that and still be able to work together to provide for this development is a positive step, said McLeod.

"It will contribute to the North," he said about Prairie Creek Mine.

McLeod's said he's optimistic the best-case scenario of construction at the mine starting next year followed by production in 2014 can be reached. It's all dependent on the permitting process, however, he said.

This is the fifth socio-economic agreement the territorial government has signed.