

Minnova preparing for 1996 shutdown

The Mine has set up an industrial adjustment committee, and is finalizing closure plans with province

by Darren MacDonald
Staff

A budget of \$40,000 has been set for the newly-formed Industrial Adjustment Committee (IAC) at Minnova Inc.'s mine near Schreiber.

The committee will help workers at the company's Winston Lake operation find new jobs after the mine shuts down, probably at the end of 1996.

"Normally what would happen is, for example, (the mill) in Red Rock would announce a shut down, and they would kick in with an IAC, which basically would involve trying to find job opportunities for laid off workers," says Mine Manager Tom Dickson.

"We're trying to be more proactive than that, and work things out over the next four years, as opposed to the last six months before we shut down."

A letter Minnova sent to councils in Schreiber and Terrace Bay outlined the company's schedule for downsizing

its workforce. The company will have 126 employees in 1996, compared with its current level of 169.

The mine plans to reduce its workforce to 163 in 1993, 147 in 1994, 137 in 1995 and 126 in 1996.

As for the committee, it includes a chairperson (who hasn't been selected yet), two representatives from management and an alternate, two elected staff members, three elected union members, and one representative from the provincial Department of Labour and the Federal Ministry of Employment and Immigration.

"I guess the committee's role is to prepare people for what's going to happen," says Dickson. "And it will help employees in a number of ways, including education and retraining."

The IAC's budget will cover costs such as transportation and the chairperson's expenses. But

it will not cover costs employees incur during, for example, retraining or moving.

"They will be assisting people through the process (of finding new employment)," he says. "But the actual monies would have to come from other agencies."

Although money is being spent looking for new ore deposits, Dickson says the chances of finding a mineable deposit at Winston Lake is becoming more remote as 1996 approaches.

"We're pretty much finalizing the exploration in this area right now," he says.

"As a corporate entity, we'll always keep looking as long as we're a mining company. But although there's still money being spent here, there's less of a chance of finding huge deposits."

The mine is also finalizing its closure plan with the provincial government.

"That's something that's regulated by law in Ontario's mining industry," he says.

"(The plan) discusses many things, but one of them is the actual look of the site. And we're looking at a site that will be totally rehabilitated and returned, in essence, to its natural state."

To achieve this, Dickson

says all of the structures at the mine will be removed, the tailings pond will be made into a marsh, and the entire area will be covered over with plant life.

"But the next step in the process is choosing a chairperson for the committee," he says. "And that should take place fairly shortly."

Welfare adminis.

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Schreiber, it wouldn't matter. You would be eligible on the same basis and for the same amount of funding.

"And there's also the potential to prevent welfare fraud. It would prevent someone from applying in both communities."

"I think it will tend to cut down on (fraud)," agrees Aurel Gauthier. "If you have one person doing the job, over a period of time that person will tend to become more knowledgeable with the scene, and will have more information on who's doing what."

The 50 per cent of the administrator's salary not covered by the subsidy would be paid by the townships in proportion to the number of cases in each municipality.

For example, if during a given month there were 75 cases, and 50 of them were in Schreiber and 25 were in Terrace Bay, Schreiber would pay a proportionally higher part of the administrator's salary for that month.

"(The proposal) will be going to the councils for approval in December, so we'll know then whether or not they're in favour of proceeding," says Dave Fulton.

"If they are willing, and if the Ministry has the funding, they're hoping to have it in place by Jan. 1."

Local police wear blue ribbons

Police constables in Schreiber and Terrace Bay are taking part in the blue ribbon campaign. The campaign is intended to show the general public the local polices' concern over the proposed use of force regulations.

The regulations would require officers to file a written report every time they draw their guns.

"The guys are supporting the program by wearing the ribbons," says Terrace Bay Police Services Chief Wes Fenton. "Metro Toronto (Police) started it, and we're showing unification with them by supporting their efforts to bring it to the attention to the general public."

In Schreiber, OPP Sgt. Andy Templar says the OPP Commissioner has rescinded an order preventing OPP Constables from wearing the ribbons.

"He has given us permission to wear them while on duty," he says.

In a related matter, the head of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP) issued a press release stating they have "lost confidence and trust" in Ontario Solicitor General Alan Pilkey.

"Our Association participated in 18 months of deliberation on the proposed use of force regulations with members of police services boards and Mr. Pilkey's staff," Association Chief Alvin Barber is quoted as saying.

"In many cases we agreed to compromises in the interest of consensus. Mr. Pilkey has rewarded this cooperation by throwing away the significant efforts of his original committee and constituting a new select committee which ignored our concerns on all too many issues.

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THANK YOU

Words printed or otherwise stated cannot express our deepest thanks for the help and encouragement during my recent accident and recovery period.

To Dr. K. Wilkes, the McCausland Hospital Staff, the Home Care Nurses, Sharon McParland and Barb Lalonde, and the Ambulance Personnel, I am grateful for your professional advice and care.

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