

Films bring out the best of mining

First mining film festival a success

By Marlene Eisner

Dramatic music, giant trucks, wild animals, laughter and tears, and breathtaking landscapes — it was not Cecil B. DeMille, but the first annual mining film festival delivering a cast of characters and a visual celebration of mining.

Festival organizer and IDNR-TV producer Ivor Barr and his camera crew travelled in and around Quebec's northern region and created five short films for an up close and personal view of mining at its best. Held last November at the Cinema du Parc in Montreal, it was billed as the first mining film festival, "to raise awareness of the mining industry from a different perspective, free of prejudice and preconceptions... the Festival that gets to the bottom of things!"

The event attracted students, industry leaders, government officials and media, all of whom enjoyed a pre-screening cocktail/networking hour. The crowd then filtered into the 170-seat theatre and listened to speeches by Barr and his invited guests, Pierre Corbeil, minister responsible for northern



Photo courtesy of Marlene Eisner

Guests of honour at the first annual mining film fest held in Montreal included Pierre Corbeil (left), minister responsible for northern Quebec, and Fernand Trahan, mayor of Val-d'Or.

Quebec; Fernand Trahan, the mayor of Val-d'Or; and Scott Jobin-Bevans, president, Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada (PDAC).

Each of the five films presented — Meadowbank, Québec a de la veine, Il était une fois Malartic, Baker Lake and Troilus — had a unique story line,

from the history of the mining town of Malartic and the resurrection of the town by Osisko to the frigid beauty and challenges in the Far North at Meadowbank and Baker Lake in Nunavut, and the community involvement of the Mistissini Cree and Inmet Mining at Troilus.

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Barr said he created the film festival to reveal a side of mining that is rarely seen by the public or reported in the news. “We invited the media at large, industry people and students because it’s important for them to know the reality of mining,” he explained. “I think by showing some realities in a different way, with a different perspective, they see something positive. We help them to understand the morality of this industry, to see that the people who are involved in mining are educated, and that they are very skilled.”

Jobin-Bevans said he was impressed with what he saw. “He [Barr] has the right idea that we do a lot of good things and we have to get the message out to the general public.” As co-chair of the PDAC Human Resources Committee, Jobin-Bevans said he was pleased to see at least 20 mining students at the cocktail hour and in the theatre.

École Polytechnique mining director Richard Simon attended with some students, as did Angelina Mehta, McGill University’s mining engineering program manager. Mehta had encouraged her students to attend the event for two reasons: “One, it is a networking opportunity. Agnico-Eagle and Osisko are very strong supporters of our program and have hired our students to do their work terms there,” she said. “I also wanted them to be exposed to the movies. I didn’t know what message would come across, but any supplement about the industry is important.”

Second-year mining engineer student Olivier Hamel said he expected the films to be a positive presentation to the public to make mining “appear good and environmentally responsible.” But what he did not expect was the spirit of cooperation between the

native communities and industry. “I learned some interesting things and I was impressed by the stories, which had a good impact on me,” said Hamel. “There is something to be said about mines being environmentally responsible, but what also got to me was how much the mining companies are involved in the community, how they make efforts to employ the community and how the community wants to work for them.”

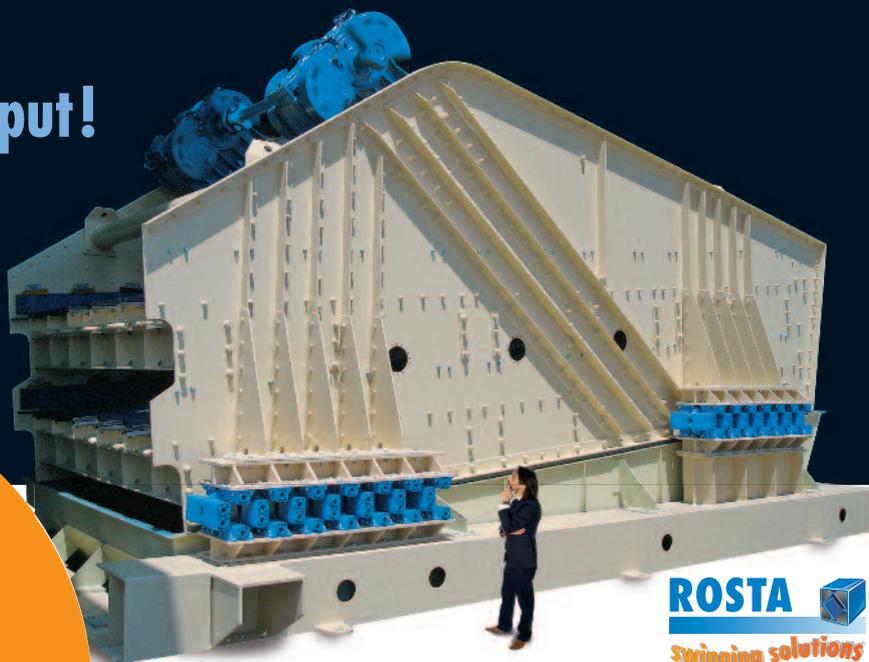
Hamel has already been exposed to mining through a work term at Mouska Mine in the Abitibi region, so much of what he saw was not new. “People outside of mining should be exposed to these movies because it shows another side of the mines that are not talked about,” he said. “These films make you believe that mines are actually run by human beings that care about not harming people and not harming the environment.” **CIM**

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