

NORTHERN LIFE

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Natural resources TV focusing on Sudbury

On Oct. 2 mining history was being made with the successful launch of IDNR-TV, a natural resources television station.

IDNR-TV is Canada's first and only television station dedicated to the natural resources sector. It intends to become a valuable source of information about the mining, oil and gas, lumber, fisheries and hydroelectric industries and highlight not only business issues but delve into social impacts, northern culture and Aboriginal concerns.

IDNR-TV can be found on Sudbury's Persona digital cable channel 945 and Satellite Dish. (Satellite: Anik F1R, Downlink frequency 41.0 Mhz, 1050 Mhz. vertical, channel 220.) Its offices are located on Spadina Ave. in Toronto.

Expansion throughout Ontario and Canada should be completed within the next year. Sudbury was chosen as the first market to broadcast it due to its enormous impact on the Canadian mining industry. The crew visited the city in September.

IDNR-TV's CEO Ivor Barr says, "IDNR-TV is a different type of television. For instance, many people see resource development as a scourge on the environment. We don't. Outside of the huge takeover battles over Inco and Falconbridge over the past year, the usual Toronto mining coverage focuses on pollution, closures or accidents. If it bleeds it leads."

Barr continues, "Don't get me wrong, IDNR-TV will cover negative mining issues, however, we will also report all aspects of resource development, which includes

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STAN SUDOL

the enormous positive benefits of rural economic development that is rarely mentioned in mainstream media."

The initial day of programming included two separate live panel discussions. The first on the future of mining in Ontario included key players such as FNX CEO Terry McGibbon, OMA president Chris Hodgson, Wallbridge Mining president Alar Soever, Sudbury-based Toromont CAT manager Dana Matson and a few others. A lively and informative

discussion ensued that highlighted the promising future of the Sudbury Basin's mining sector.

The second panel discussion on Aboriginal issues in the mining sector, hosted by producer Anita Verma included Peter Recollet, director of Sustainable Development at Wahnapiatae First Nation, and this columnist. I worked at the Ontario Native Affairs Secretariat for a year and a half in the late 1990s and continue to follow Aboriginal issues with a keen interest.

The panel discussion was to last for 45 minutes and both Peter and I were a bit concerned that we would run out of things to say. In reality, the time flew by and hopefully we both provided the viewing audience with some engaging insight to the enormous potential and some of the challenges of increasing Aboriginal participation in the mining industry.

Northern Life's managing editor, Vicki

Gilhula, was also recently interviewed by Verma in a program on Sudbury's cultural activities.

Gilhula said, "I think IDNR-TV is a very interesting concept and hope more people will have access to this innovative and informative television station. More consumers in Northern Ontario must ask their cable company to carry this station."

The only complaint would be the lack of promotion and the channel's location on the digital band, both issues limiting the viewing audience. Hopefully, IDNR-TV will soon be moved from the digital to the mainstream dial allowing for a much larger audience to see unique programming that is dedicated to the north's resource industry and this region.

Many analysts and mining executives believe the world is entering a commodity super-cycle that will last for decades, due to the voracious demands for all metals by the industrializing and urbanizing economies of Brazil, Russia, India and of course China – the so called BRIC countries.

Northern Ontario's mining sector will see billions of dollars of new investment over the next decade to help meet this increased global demand.

If there was ever a time to clearly explain to Canadians the enormous benefits of this country's resource industries, than IDNR-TV seems to be the right vehicle. It certainly deserves the support of all the people and businesses of Northern Ontario.

Stan Sudol is a Toronto-based communications consultant and policy analyst who writes extensively on mining issues. stan.sudol@sympatico.ca

LETTERS

Questions on road maintenance

Yesterday in the legislature, I raised the issue of poor winter road maintenance in the north and the resultant road closures that were not reported on the Ministry of Transportation's website nor on the ministry's road closure information hotline.

The ministry responded, "The ministry and its contractors monitor weather and road conditions so they can respond quickly. Our winter maintenance standards are among the highest in North America."

I have been told by people who are involved in winter road maintenance that they are working on skeleton crews right now with inadequate amounts of road clearing equipment and personnel.

I've been informed the full complement of staff and equipment through MTO's private contractors won't be fully in place until Oct. 23 at the earliest.

How are winter maintenance standards among the best in North America, when the ministry doesn't have the equipment and people on our highways to clear the roads of snow and ice?

It is not a strange occurrence for snow to fall in October in Northern Ontario.

I ask MTO Minister Donna Cansfield, when will winter maintenance crews be fully geared up to clear our highways and when will the MTO road closure information network be fully operational?



HAMPTON

Howard Hampton,
Leader

Ontario New Democratic Party

OTHER VOICES

Council must delay Lily Creek decision

BY THOMAS ZAITES

At the Oct. 11 meeting, city council dealt with two issues of critical importance to citizens of Greater Sudbury: the bylaw to rezone part of the Lily Creek wetlands to "office commercial special;" and a report by the healthy community cabinet that recommended council approve a "healthy community charter."

The charter outlines four priorities for a healthy community, including natural environment, which describes a healthy community as one that takes pride in its neighbourhoods, protects and preserves natural assets for future generations, regulates, and enforces further environmental protection initiatives.

Experience has shown how easily treasured green spaces can be threatened by well-meant but ill-informed decisions. In the 1970s, the Lily Creek marshlands seemed destined to become a shopping centre; in the 1990s, special interest groups declared open season on Bell Park. We owe the preservation of these treasures to an alert citizenry. But how many other green space jewels have been lost forever because of the lack of a comprehensive guide for council decision making?

In 2005, council appointed 16 community leaders to the Healthy Community

Cabinet, joining an initiative by the province, the World Health Organization and the United Nations. While we commend council for its vision, we note that the cabinet's full report with recommendations will not be delivered until November. By making the decision on the future of the Lily Creek wetland now, council undermines its own vision and makes a mockery of the cabinet's statement that "it recognizes the need to gain community support through broad community engagement..."

Policy 3.3.1(2) of The Ramsey Lake Improvement Plan (adopted under bylaw 92-258) says that "Any development that would impair the natural functioning of the Lily Creek Marsh should be prohibited."

We are not aware of any studies on the impact of development on the Lily Creek Marsh nor have we been able to find any information that would justify council's decision to approve the rezoning. Though such studies and information may exist, the public bewilderment and negative response to the rezoning indicates that "broad community engagement" is not a priority for council.

Council hopes the United Nations will designate Greater Sudbury as a regional centre of expertise in healthy community living. Can we claim to be a healthy com-

munity when our citizens feel they are kept in the dark about matters that affect them?

We recommend council put this matter on hold pending the full report of the healthy community cabinet and its promised engagement with the community; and that if, at such time, council decides its decision is validated, it will first ensure that the public it serves is fully informed as to the merits of the decision. Of course, concerned citizens could decide to delay the development pending an appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board. The ensuing publicity will not enhance the city's chance of being recognized by the United Nations.

Thomas Zaites is the chair of Save Bell Park.

Editor's note: *The city's planning committee was expected to make a decision last night (Tuesday) about whether to allow a school to be built on property near the wetlands. Any decision would still have to go to city council for final approval.*

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