



Tamerlane good to go says review board

Underground lead/zinc mine on old Pine Point lands could start construction this summer if permitting goes as expected

BY SEAN PERCY
 EDITOR

Plans to mine lead and zinc near Polar Lake got a huge boost Friday, when the board doing the environmental review gave it the green light.

Construction could begin this summer. Hauling ore may be a year and a half away, however, with land and water permits still needed, followed by a 15-month construction phase.

The Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board has told the federal government that the proposed mine is not likely to cause environmental problems, and that there's no need for a more in-depth environmental impact review.

"It is the Review Board's opinion that the proposed development is not likely to have any significant adverse impacts on the environment or be a cause of significant public concern. The Review Board has therefore determined that an environmental impact review of this proposed development need not be conducted and that this development should proceed to the regulatory phase of approvals," board chair Gabrielle Mackenzie-Scott wrote to the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, Chuck Strahl, on Friday.

The review board had come under pressure in recent weeks from Tamerlane and local aboriginal groups, who wrote letters complaining that the process was taking too long.



Tamerlane vice-president David Swisher

If Strahl does not object within 10 days of the Review Board's decision, the project can proceed to the regulatory phase run by the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board.

Tamerlane vice-president David Swisher said the review board's decision was not a surprise, but that there is a sense of relief within the company.

"It's an affirmation of the support seen from all the communities - Fort Resolution, the Hay River Reserve and the town of Hay River," said Swisher.

Tamerlane Ventures wants to build the mine on one of its deposits, called R-190, located 42 kilometres east of Hay River near Polar Lake.

The company plans to build an underground test mine, extract one million tonnes of lead/zinc ore, concentrate and separate the lead and zinc ores, and then truck it to the new transfer station at the junction of Highways 2 and 5, where it would be loaded onto rail cars headed south.

The mine will include a vertical mine shaft, a freeze wall in the ground around the mine to prevent water from entering the mine, a deep well for disposing any mine and process water, and a process plant to concentrate the ore and make it ready for shipping.

During the environmental assessment, Tamerlane Ventures made 140 commitments to reduce the overall impact of the development and make it a better project. In addition, the company adopted a new water management system which the board says is more environmentally sound than the original project's design. These improvements and developer commitments for the project were important factors in the decision, said the review board.

Swisher said the company's flexibility during the hearings helped address environmental issues and that the company intends to live up to all those commitments.

In a press release, Tamerlane president and CEO, Ross Burns, said: "We are very pleased with MVEIRB's decision, as this is a major milestone for Tamerlane's permit approval process. Tamerlane now anticipates an expeditious approval of all operating permits."

"The company has worked closely with local communities, regulatory officials and other stakeholders for over two years to prove the sustainability and benefits of the Pine Point project from both environmental and socioeconomic perspectives. Today's announcement is a culmination of these efforts," said Burns.



Andrea Bettger was presented with Citizen of the Year honours by the Hay River Chamber of Commerce on Friday. photo by SCOTT CLOUTHIER

Fiddling around earns Bettger Citizen of the Year honour

BY SEAN PERCY
 HUB EDITOR

Andrea Bettger on Friday became one of the youngest, and newest, Hay Riverites to ever win the Hay River Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year honour.

Bettger, 33, has lived in Hay River for just five years.

But during that time she has made a big impact on the lives of Hay River music students, says Linda Duford, who nominated Bettger for the award.

"Three years ago I was talking to Roger Morrison and he was talking about how happy and thrilled he was a certain person had moved to Hay River and how that person had changed the landscape of Hay River," said Duford speech introducing Bettger to the attendees of the annual Chamber banquet.

"The pied piper of fiddling has moved to Hay River," he said.

"She's just such a wonderful person,

(please see BETTGER, page 2)

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