

localnews

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Editor DON MACDONALD dmaconnald@thesudburystar.com 674-5271, ext. 232

■ **MINING:** Banks are prepared to lend junior miner up to \$30 million

First Nickel takes step forward

CAROL MULLIGAN
The Sudbury Star

First Nickel Inc. officials say the junior miner has taken a huge step forward in developing the Lockerby Depth Project by entering into an engagement letter with two major banks.

First Nickel announced Wednesday it signed the letters with Societe General (Canada Branch) and Commonwealth Bank of Australia to borrow up to \$30 million for the \$40-million-plus project.

Bill Anderson, president and chief executive officer of First Nickel, called the deal a big milestone.

"It's the beginning of the full financing," he said. "It's a huge credibility thing for us, I believe."

Lockerby Mine, which First Nickel purchased from Xstrata Nickel, has been on care and maintenance for some time as the miner searched for the money to go further underground.

Anderson said the letter of engagement means the two banks are prepared to lend First Nickel up to \$30 million if it meets certain conditions.

"The conditions relate to things like due diligence and a bunch of other things," said Anderson in a telephone inter-

First Nickel Facts

- First Nickel is a Canadian mining and exploration company.
- Its activities are primarily focused in the Sudbury Basin.

view from Toronto. "I think it's fair to say we're a fair way down the (pipe) with them, but we're not there yet."

In a written release, Anderson said the engagement letter is a milestone in "structuring a cornerstone financing package" for the Lockerby Depth Project.

The agreement means his company should be "on target" to begin construction of the

➤ First Nickel also has exploration properties in Timmins and Belmont, in eastern Ontario.

➤ First Nickel's shares are traded on the TSX under the symbol FNI.

project in the fourth quarter of this year, probably in October or November, he said.

There are other initiatives relating to the project that First Nickel will announce soon, said Anderson.

The pre-production cost of the project is at least \$40 million plus working capital, said Anderson, "loose change to cover other stuff. The \$30 mil-

lion is a really good step ... and an excellent start."

He explained that a letter of engagement is the first step in the loan process. Other stages such as a commitment letter and a loan agreement should follow.

While waiting until the fourth quarter, First Nickel will do the work it has to do to meet the banks' conditions and to "round out the overall financing we need."

"People should take (this announcement) as a very, very significant positive step," he said. "Stay tuned."

The ore that First Nickel will eventually mine at Lockerby

will go to Xstrata Nickel for processing at Strathcona Mill. "As soon as it goes in the gate, they own it," said Anderson. That was part of the original purchase agreement between the two parties.

First Nickel would be happy to be producing now when nickel is selling for \$9 a pound and more, but it needs to invest in deepening the mine before it can do that.

"We always say, when you're a small mining company, we're just price-takers. We don't have any pull or clout on the nickel markets whatsoever. We just go with the breeze."

cmulligan@thesudburystar.com

localbriefs

SPEND TIME WITH IGNATIEFF

Carol Hartman and the Sudbury Federal Liberal Riding Association are inviting people to a sit-down lunch with Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff on Sept. 12 at the Caruso Club, 385 Haig St.

The reception begins at noon, with remarks at 12:30 and lunch at 1.

Tickets are \$275, tax receipt \$250 and tax credit \$200.

LOOKING FOR A HOME

The Sudbury SPCA said Wednesday it is nearing maximum capacity for cats and dogs at its Sudbury shelter.

As a result, the SPCA is urging people who have been thinking of adopting a pet into their household and family to drop by the shelter to meet the more than 80 cats and kittens and eight dogs looking for a home.

Also included in the list of animals ready to be adopted are guinea pigs, rats and rabbits.

The SPCA also said it needs dry cat and kitten food; non-clumping cat litter; canned cat food; guinea pig and rabbit food, bedding and hay; household bleach; and laundry detergent.

All other donations are greatly appreciated and can be dropped off at its shelter at 760 Notre Dame Ave., across from Dollarama, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Saturday, or from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sundays. Ring doorbell if dropping off items before 11 a.m.

FROCHE 2010 FESTIVITIES

Electropop band Misteur Valaire has been added to the Froche 2010 festivities.

The band performs Sept. 16 at Science North's Vale Inco Cavern. The group Qualité Motel, comprised of the same five members as Misteur Valaire, is also performing its new DJ set.

Tickets went on sale Wednesday at \$10 for students and \$20 for adults. Tickets for the after-hours dance party with the band are \$8 per person. A Full Froche passport for \$20 (students) or \$40 (adults) allows admission to both concerts and the after party. Tickets available from the TNO box office at 705-525-5606 or online at www.leTNO.ca.

WARMHEARTS WALK

On Sept. 18, Warmhearts Palliative Caregivers Sudbury/Manitoulin will host its 8th annual Warmhearts Walk for Palliative Care.

Mayor John Rodriguez will lead the way as this year's honorary chair, supporting a community organization that helps many terminally ill remain in their own homes.

Walk registration starts at 10 at the Warmhearts office, 303 York St. Prizes and barbecue will follow.

Get pledge forms by calling 677-0077 or visit the group's website at www.warmhearts.ca.

CHARITY GOLF

The registration deadline for the Parkinson Society's golf tournament has been extended.

The Men's Charity Golf Tournament on Aug. 28 and 29 is at Grill Marks Bistro Golf & Conference Centre. Registration is \$150, which includes one free practice round, two rounds of golf, lunch and dinner both days and a participation package.

To register, contact grillmarks-bistro@gmail.com or 705-897-6419. Contact Peter Higham at 705-566-8719 or lphigham@hotmail.com for information about the local Parkinson support group.

■ GREAT CANADIAN ROADSHOW: In town this week



GINO DONATO The Sudbury Star

Boris Shreyberg, show manager with the Great Canadian Roadshow, checks out some gold at the Howard Johnson on Brady Street on Wednesday afternoon. The show is back this week and runs from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Thursday and Friday and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday. Admission is free. Bring your collectibles and precious metals. Offers will be made on the spot if there is interest in it. Payment is made immediately.

■ FOOD BANK: Cards go on sale Sept. 25

Card campaign prompts early Christmas

LINDSAY JOLIVET
For The Sudbury Star

Call it Christmas in August - the Sudbury Food Bank and The Sudbury Star are gearing up for the 2010 Christmas/Holiday Card Campaign.

All designs were submitted by local artists, said Dan Xilon, Sudbury Food Bank administrator.

Artists can still submit work to the campaign. A total of about 13 holiday-themed scenes are produced onto cards in French and English. They go on sale Sept. 25 during the S.C.A.R.F. Studio Tour. Cards are \$5 each.

The official launch, entitled Art of Dessert, is Oct. 14 at Sudbury Fine Cars. Tickets are \$50 and the donated artwork from Christmas cards will be auctioned with fine wines and spirits. All of the proceeds go to the food bank.

It's a double gift, said Xilon. The card shows appreciation to the recipient and helps those in need, he said. The campaign began small, but has grown to the point that people are buying their parents and family members cards every year, said Xilon.

Then schools caught on to the trend. Now, many students buy cards for teachers, greatly increasing the money raised, he said.

Last year, the campaign raised \$67,000, said Xilon.

"It really has become a major part of the campaign, so that's beautiful," said Xilon. The idea began in Sudbury and expanded to dozens of other cities, said the administrator, "because it's a wonderful concept."

The cards cost no money to make because artists donate designs and community members give their time to create the cards.

"The beauty about this card is that it's all Sudbury made," said Xilon.

However, the bottom line is it gives a hungry person a meal, he said. A total of 14,500 people per month use the food bank, said Xilon.

However, the number is not all negative, he said. Many who use the food bank get back on their feet, but they don't forget the help they received. They donate time and food to the food bank, bringing the giving full-circle, said Xilon.

"It's the best pay-it-forward program in the world," he said.

This is The Sudbury Star's fifth year pre-



LINDSAY JOLIVET For The Sudbury Star

Dan Xilon, Ray Lavigne, Sherri Lavigne, Victoria May and Michael Smith displaying Sherri's painting for the 2010 Christmas Card Campaign.

sending the Christmas card fundraiser, said Michael Smith, a multimedia account representative for the newspaper.

"The Sudbury Star is proud to once again be presenting the campaign knowing that every dollar raised turns into food for those less fortunate during the holidays," he said.

"This campaign has evolved the idea of local culture and identity through the eyes of Sudbury's thriving and vibrant arts community."

The Star is proud to work with the food bank and local arts community on the campaign, said Smith.

Victoria May, owner of Victoria's Custom Framing & Stitchery on Durham Street is supporting the 2010 campaign.

"This is an incredible opportunity to both recognize arts and culture in our community and to give to those less fortunate in the City of Greater Sudbury," said May.

The main featured artist is Sherri Lavigne, graphics editor at The Star. Her work will appear on posters and cards. Lavigne has donated a painting to the fundraiser four times.

"A reason why I want to help the food bank is I know what it's like to go hungry," she said.

Lavigne moved here from southern Ontario to pursue a job offer at an advertising agency. However, the business went bankrupt, leaving her with a low-paying waitress job.

For a long time, she could not afford food, said Lavigne.

At one point, the only food she had was a two-pound bag of animal crackers she received for Christmas. She lived off the crackers until they were almost gone.

"I have no problem giving my paintings to them for them to raise as much money as they can for the food bank," said Lavigne.

Cards are sold at Lougheeds Flower Shops, Home Hardware, Apollo Restaurant and the food bank.

For more locations or information, call the Sudbury Food Bank at 671-9663 or Michael Smith at 561-7988.

The final call for artwork is Sept. 1. E-mail submissions to christmascard@thesudburystar.com or call the numbers above.

■ PAKISTAN FLOODS

Difficult to watch

RACHEL PUNCH
The Sudbury Star

Naeem Ahmed finds it difficult to read and watch news stories about flood-ravaged Pakistan.

Most of his family members in Pakistan do not live in the areas affected by the floods, but friends of his do.

"I called a friend and he was telling me that there are whole towns underwater," said Ahmed, who lives in Naughton. "There are kids whose parents have been displaced or killed. They don't really know what to do, where to go or what to eat."

"It's a very difficult situation." Ahmed, of the Pakistan Canada Cultural Society of Sudbury, is helping to organize a couple of fundraisers for flood relief.

On Saturday, a fundraising barbecue will take place outside Zellers in the Southridge Mall from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. The event will feature henna and face-painting. The public is invited to come and speak to organizers about the situation in Pakistan.

"We can explain to them what is going on over there," Ahmed said.

The group is also collecting donations of water bottles, cookies, crackers, potato chips, juice boxes, dates, powdered milk, soap bars, baby bottles and plastic cups to send to Pakistan.

The donated items will be put into small boxes and sent to the country via Pakistan International Airline's cargo service, which is being provided for free, Ahmed said.

"Our goal is to fill about 500 boxes within the next couple of weeks," Ahmed said.

The organization is holding a fundraising dinner Sept. 18 at the YMCA at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$35.

"We have sold approximately 90 tickets so far. We still have 110 more to go."

For tickets, call 207-5345 or e-mail info@pakistansociety.ca.

Another fundraising dinner is being held Saturday at the Polish Combatants Hall. It's being organized by the Pakistan Canada Foundation. Both groups are working together to raise funds.

The Canadian Red Cross branch in Sudbury is also collecting donations. The collection for Pakistan started out slow, said Dave St. Georges, community services co-ordinator at Red Cross.

"The donations have become very, very steady over the past week ... Once they started coming in, it started steam-rolling for sure," he said.

His organization has worked in Pakistan in the past for disaster relief.

"We have a very close working relationship with the people there. Donors can realize that their money is being used for a good cause and we have experience in the area," Ahmed said.

It's estimated that 20 million people have been affected by Pakistan's worst flooding in living memory.

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