

The Ontario Mining Association: An Important Stakeholder in Education and Outreach

The Ontario Mining Association (OMA) represents the mining industry in the province. It is renowned as one of the longest serving trade organizations in Canada, having been established in 1920. Members of the association are engaged in exploring, producing and processing mineral resources in an environmentally responsible manner.

The OMA understands that education about the mining industry and the role that minerals and mined products play in our daily lives is important. The mission of the OMA's Education and Outreach Committee includes advocating for the industry in an effort to enhance its public image, to lessen difficulties posed by the pending human resources shortage, to become a "virtual community organizer," link provider and integrator for the sector's education and outreach programs, and to interface with and establish links with other groups involved in education and outreach in the mining industry.

Educational objectives are achieved through individual efforts and via partnerships with other organizations. Educational audiences include students, teachers, Aboriginal people, and the general public.

NickelQuest, a virtual mine tour developed by the Ontario Mining Association, was created to help Intermediate and Secondary teachers educate their students about careers in the mining industry, using an entertaining and informative approach. Released in 2007, **NickelQuest** is a popular educational resource that provides students and teachers with a simulated visit to an underground mining operation. Since it is logistically impossible to take every student to a mine, this virtual mine tour takes a mine to the classroom.

The Ontario Mining Associations' **Mining New Opportunities** video project was created to assist Aboriginal Canadians gain a better understanding of the mineral industry and the employment and entrepreneurial opportunities it offers. A corresponding Teacher's Resource and Speaker's Guide, containing 13 learning activities for educators teaching youth in junior, intermediate and senior grade levels, was developed in partnership with PDAC Mining Matters. The learning activities were designed to build on the themes presented by the video/DVD. The film was created by an Aboriginal owned and operated television production house, Big Soul, and was released in five languages - Cree, Oji-Cree, Ojibway, English and French. The two component kit was recognized with an Honourable Mention at the 2006 Conference Board of Canada's Community Learning Awards.

The **So You Think You Know Mining** Video competition was launched in 2008. The competition offers high school students the opportunity to create a two to three minute video that describes the benefits of mining. The entries were judged by a panel that included representatives from the mining and film and television industries. Winning entries received a total of \$17,500 in cash prizes and trophies, and were celebrated at a special Red Carpet Ceremony at the Canadian Institute of Mining, Metallurgy and Petroleum conference in May 2009. In its inaugural year, there were five SYTYKM prizes – Best Overall Video, Best Directing, Best Writing of an Original Screenplay, Best Music (Original Score) and Best Comedy. Along with these categories, for 2010,

there will also be awards for Best Animated Video, Best Video in a Language Other Than English and a People's Choice Award. In 2010 there is a total \$22,500 in prize money available.

In 2009, two of the OMA's videos were adapted as integral component of an educational resource, "Focus on Sustainability", intended to support environmental education in Canada, and the Ontario Science and Technology Curriculum in particular. The resource includes a DVD with eight video clips, including *NickelQuest* and *Mining New Opportunities*, a teacher guide, and 25 sets of eight reading articles in a magazine format.

The OMA actively supports Skills Canada-Ontario in its effort to educate students about skilled trades and technology careers, especially in the mining industry. The Association participates annually in the Skills Canada-Ontario technological skills competitions as an exhibitor and judge. The Education and Outreach Committee works collectively to coordinate exhibitors and displays that showcase the mining industry and highlight the skilled trades and technologies used in its pursuit. The OMA also contributes to the Skills Canada *Skills Work* Booklet, a publication prepared for youth in the process of exploring career options. The recent edition of *Skills Work* (2008) was revised to include six mining industry careers, including Environmental, Geological, Health and Safety, and Instrumentation and Remote Control Technicians, Mine Technologists and Production Miners. The booklet includes career information describing scopes of work, requisite education training, and experience, and earnings. The booklet also features a personality profile of a young woman professional Geological Technologist.

The Ontario Mining Association is a lead player in mining industry Education and Outreach.