

Supervisory Positions in the Uranium Industry
Opportunities and Challenges for Residents of Saskatchewan's North



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Abstract

This report examines the “Supervisory Positions in the Uranium Industry: Opportunities and Challenges for Residents of Saskatchewan’s North,” and stems from a recommendation in the 2013 Community Vitality Monitoring Partnership Process (CVMPP) study “The Socio-Economic Impacts of the Modern Era of Uranium Mining on Northern Saskatchewan.” The research focuses on AREVA Resources Canada Inc. (AREVA) and Cameco Corporation’s (Cameco) current human resource policies as they pertain to Residents of Saskatchewan North growth in supervisory positions in the uranium industry. The report examines the organizational factors and touches on the societal and cultural factors that have an influence on RSN supervisory level acquisition rates. Minimal RSN specific data and research was found and therefore a broader research of aboriginal employment was conducted. Evaluation of best practices in other industries (Alberta-oil sands and North West Territories-diamonds) provided some information on the enhancement of hiring Aboriginal people. There was no specific information available on increasing RSNs in supervisory positions. The intent of this report is to provide industry with findings and recommendations to be considered in their efforts to provide RSNs employees with additional supports when seeking progression to supervisory positions.

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Introduction

In March 2013, the Community Vitality Monitoring Partnership Process (CVMPP) released the study “The Socio-Economic Impacts of the Modern Era of Uranium Mining on Northern Saskatchewan.” The purpose of the study was to identify the socio-economic impacts of the modern era of uranium mining on Northern Saskatchewan. It focused on types of effect that were discussed by the Joint Federal-Provincial Panel on Uranium Mining in Northern Saskatchewan (Joint-Panel) in its 1997 cumulative observations report about potential socio-economic impacts of the uranium industry (CVMPP, 2013). Conclusions of the study were discussed in the following categories: education and training, employment, business, local participation, contributions to government, worker health and community vitality. Based on these conclusions, CVMPP made recommendations to the uranium mining companies, governments, stakeholders and the CVMPP itself. One of the recommendations under the employment category and basis of this research report was that CVMPP examine “Supervisory Positions in the Uranium Industry: Opportunities and Challenges for Residents of Saskatchewan’s North.” This report will examine current industry human resource policies, perceived and existing societal and cultural contexts and current RSN employment trends. It will also establish an inventory of best practices and recommendations relating to the goal of increasing the number of RSNs in supervisory positions in the uranium industry.

The research process for this report consisted of a combination of a general literature review, a diamond and oil sand mining program review and AREVA Resources Canada Inc. and Cameco Corporation program review including seven interviews with company personnel. This report did not interview actual RSN mine employees and those in supervisory positions. The

report is to provide a company baseline and strongly suggests that interviews with mine site employees take place in subsequent study phases. The research process uncovered minimal topic-specific published literature and therefore examines general human resource and business literature that is related to the report topic.

Based on the completed research, several assumptions are made in this report. Increasing the number of RSNs in supervisory positions may result in:

- increasing in the overall number of RSNs employed in the uranium mining industry through improved recruitment and retention of RSNs
 - improving community and industry relations
- and
- assisting to improve the socio-economic conditions of Northern Saskatchewan.

The term Resident of Saskatchewan's North (RSN) is used extensively throughout this report. According to the Province of Saskatchewan, a Resident of Saskatchewan's North or RSN is defined as:

A person who has resided in Saskatchewan's Northern Administrative District for a period of 10 years or one half of his or her age, whichever is lesser, such a person:

- shall not lose status by relocating outside of Saskatchewan's North for educational purposes;

- shall not lose status by relocating outside of Saskatchewan's North for five years or less;

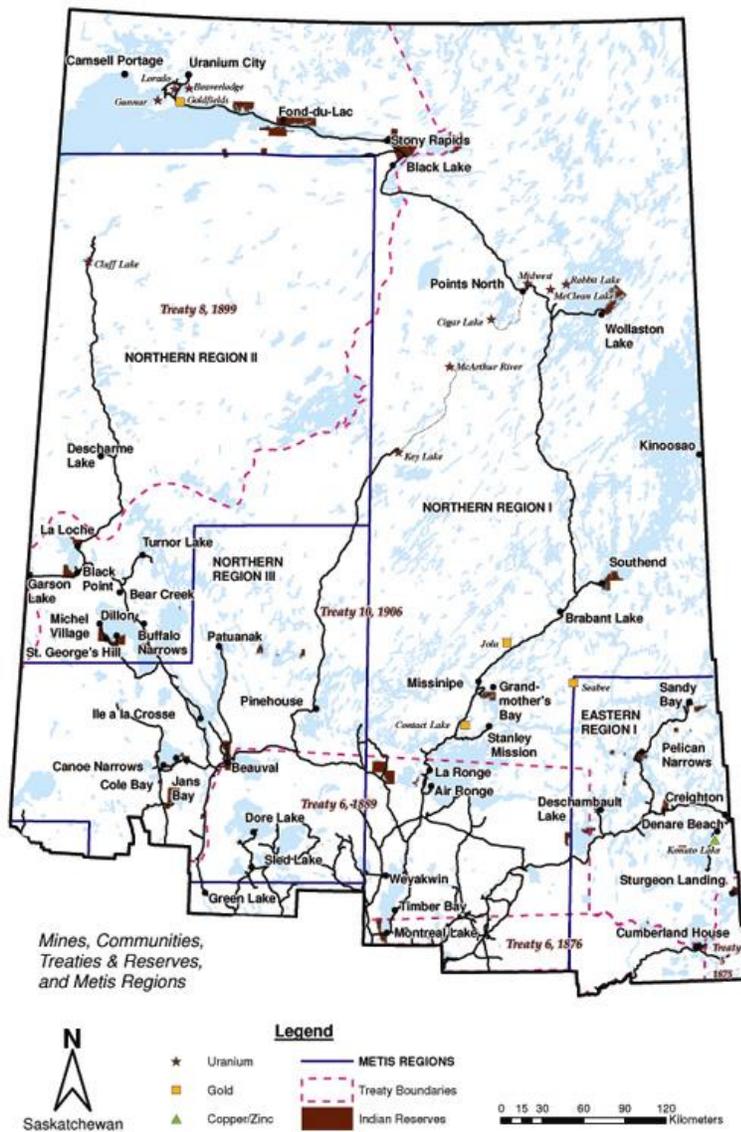
and

- shall regain status if he or she has lived outside of Saskatchewan's North for more than five years but re-establishes primary residency in Saskatchewan's North at the time of hire.

A person who transfers from one mine operation in Saskatchewan's North to another, or is re-employed within one year after leaving mine employment in Saskatchewan's North, and who met the criteria of a Resident of Saskatchewan's North contained in the applicable Human Resource Development Agreement at the time of recruitment to that operation.

- A person who has been designated by the Minister to be a Resident of Saskatchewan's North (2013).

Map 1: Northern Saskatchewan Administrative District



Source: New North, 2013

Methodology

The methodology employed within this research report is a combination of various methods including:

- 1) data analysis to provide a baseline of RSNs in supervisory positions,
- 2) general “aboriginal and employment” literature review,
- 3) scan of resource industries in somewhat comparable northern areas and examine their best practices (Northern Alberta-oil sands and North West Territories-diamonds),
- 4) company (AREVA Resources Canada Inc. and Cameco Corporation) career guidance program review through documents and interviews, and
- 5) interviews with AREVA Resources Canada Inc. and Cameco Corporation corporate and mine human resources personnel.

Information collected through this research was synthesized into challenges, opportunities and five specific recommendations aimed to increase the number of RSNs in supervisory positions. Several of the recommendations are additions to innovative approaches already implemented by AREVA Resources Canada Inc. and Cameco Corporation.

1) Resident of Saskatchewan North Supervisory Position Data

As a result of the Joint Federal-Provincial panel, it was recommended that mining companies strive towards a goal of 67% RSN employment in the industry. It is important to note that the 67% goal is a recommendation and not a legislated benchmark. According to both AREVA and Cameco, they refer to “best efforts” to increase employment participation amongst RSNs in their annual Human Resource Development Plans and annual Socio-Economic Benefit Reports (2011).

From 1981 to 2011, the overall number of RSNs directly employed in the uranium mining industry increased from 201 to 832 or about 46% of the total workforce. As of 2012 statistics, 71 RSNs were employed as either supervisors or managers in the industry. From 1992 to 2012, the number of RSNs in supervisory positions increased from 18 to 71 or an increase of 394%. Despite this progressive trend, the ratio of RSN in supervisory positions versus all supervisory positions continue to remain relatively constant and below 26.4% (Cameco, 2013). In order for industry to achieve the 67% RSN employment rate, substantial gains to the number of RSNs in supervisory positions may directly and indirectly impact RSN recruitment and retention. It is assumed by industry representatives that having RSNs in supervisory positions would provide good role models and improve communications and cultural awareness. It is also assumed that by diversifying the occupations RSNs fill, more RSNs will be employed in the industry.

2) General “aboriginal and employment” literature review

This general literature review compares, interprets and synthesizes research related to “Supervisory Positions in the Uranium Industry Opportunities and Challenges for Residents of Saskatchewan’s North.” The review investigates three main literature groups: works pertaining to a conducive workplace environment, employee progression and employer opportunity. Best practices in the literature were selected that could be applied to the unique culture and demographics of Northern Saskatchewan and its residents.

The general literature reviews was conducted by searching the University of Saskatchewan online library, Google Scholar and by general Google searches. The terms used in the search included “Aboriginal employment,” “First Nations business,” “Aboriginal retention and

recruitment,” and “local employment.” No published literature relating to RSN employment in the uranium industry was found. General literature on local employment offered some information when compared to the unique situation in Northern Saskatchewan.

An example of a document that examines workplace protocol and considerations is the “Workplace Protocol Guide for Industry and Employers of Indigenous Queenslanders” (2010) published by the Queensland government in Australia. This protocol was developed to guide and assist industry and businesses in the recruitment of Aboriginal people. According to the document, “the employment of aboriginal people can be a rewarding experience for all, not just from an economic perspective but also from cultural and social views” (p. 2). The protocol highlights the need for employers to create an atmosphere that supports the history and background of the region and the people they are employing. The protocol outlines the following areas:

- recruitment: how to effectively recruit Aboriginal people;
 - interviewing: cultural considerations when interviewing Aboriginal candidates;
 - induction: clearly communicating expectations and responsibilities of new employees;
 - retention: keeping Aboriginal people engaged and contributing to the organization;
 - mentoring: supporting development and learning in the workplace;
- and
- common issues indigenous people experience: addressing prejudice, protocols and language barriers.

The “Workplace Protocol Guide for Industry and Employers of Indigenous Queenslanders” provides a baseline for creating a supportive workplace for Aboriginal people and can be easily adapted to the uranium mining industry in Northern Saskatchewan. Although no such guide

exists for Saskatchewan employers, in 2000 the provincial government signed an agreement committing to increase Aboriginal employment, break down barriers and communicate employment opportunities (Government of Saskatchewan, 2000).

Additional literature for Aboriginal workplace enhancement includes “Province signs Aboriginal Employment Agreement.” The article discusses the 2000 agreement to increase Aboriginal employment, break down barriers and communicate employment opportunities. The agreement committed the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples of Saskatchewan and the provincial government to work together on employment, cultural and economic development. The Saskatchewan agreement is brief but provides background historical information on the Province of Saskatchewan’s commitment to First Nations employment and socio-economic betterment. Agreements of this nature assist AREVA Resources Canada Inc. and Cameco Corporation to develop a framework that will enhance the opportunities for Residents of Saskatchewan North employment in the uranium industry and create support for successful careers by leveraging government and private funding and initiatives.

In 2010, the Saskatchewan government terminated the Aboriginal Employment Development Program despite apparent success. As of March 31, 2009 the program had established 98 active participant agreements that resulted in 4,465 Aboriginal people entering the workforce. While the program itself cost \$780,000, the Saskatchewan Institute of Public Policy calculates the cost of Aboriginal unemployment to be \$2 billion annually (CUPE, 2010). According to Minister of Advanced Education Rob Norris, there was no proof that the program was increasing Aboriginal employment numbers. He also stated that since the program was terminated, Aboriginal youth employment numbers have been going up in the last nine months (Saskatchewan Sage, 2011). In 2011, the provincial government established the Joint Task Force

on First Nations and Métis Education and Employment with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations to look at improving education and employment outcomes for First Nations and Métis People (Government of Saskatchewan, 2013). On April 15, 2013, the joint task force issued its final report, and it will be interesting to see how the implementation of the recommendations will impact mining sector companies such as AREVA and Cameco, as well as RSN employees.

In addition to research on supportive workplaces, employee progression and planning are also vital to increasing the number of RSN in supervisory positions. The academic journal article, “Developing a Better Model: Aboriginal Employment and the Resource Community of Leaf Rapids, Manitoba,” by Sarah Ramsden examines the unique relationship between Aboriginal employment, community and industry. Leaf Rapids is a highly planned urban centre commonly represented as a departure from the past and distinguished by “attempts to bring modern comforts to the North and implement a new degree of social equality (p. 1)”. The objectives for the town, as outlined by the Leaf Rapids Development Corporation, included creating a multicultural town, increasing local northern employment and establishing manpower programs. The advantage of the model is that outstanding designs for local northern employment were imported from across the globe such as best practices from Northern Scandinavia and Russia. Best practices of racial integration and First Nation participation are evident in the growth of the Aboriginal labour force, increasing from only three percent in the 1960s to seventeen in the late 1970s (2012).

The case study “Saskatchewan’s Approach to Increasing Aboriginal People’s representation in the Health Care Workforce (2007)” prepared by the Saskatchewan Institute of Public Policy and Human Resources and Social Development Canada is aimed at increasing

Aboriginal representation. The study indicates that through literature review and key informant interviews, that the health care sector in Saskatchewan can be seen as one of the country's best practices in creating a representative health sector workforce. Although best practices have been employed, the Aboriginal Employment Development Program Statistical Report for the Health Sector for 2005-2006, indicated that 1,276 of the 34,205 personnel in the health sector workforce (not counting officials of the federal or provincial departments of Health) are self-identified Aboriginal people. Thus, in 2005-2006, Aboriginal people made up only 3.7 per cent of the health care workforce in Saskatchewan.

The case study makes several recommendations to policy makers seeking to either establish an Aboriginal representative workforce strategy in the health sector (or other sectors) or enhance the effectiveness of existing strategies (2007):

- define a problem or opportunity that will motivate all necessary actors to get involved
- establish a strategic framework
- build in performance indicators and formal accountability processes as soon as possible
- establish a process by which development, implementation and ongoing refinement of strategy can be managed
- take care in selecting individuals to assign to the process for their soft management skills and ability to negotiate results among groups effectively
- ensure that participation in the development and implementation of the strategy is broad enough to maximize commitment and effectiveness while not so broad as to make the action impossible
- allow the partners to create flexible arrangements to undertake specific tasks that do not implicate all partners

-be conscious of the need for external reporting and feedback and establish a reporting process early.

It is assumed that through creating a representative workforce, Aboriginal employees will be more likely to succeed in various positions. If employees find in a supportive and comforting environment they are more inclined to seek further career progression.

The other side of employee progression and development is the actions and determination of the employees themselves. Employee progression may be stimulated by employer-created opportunities such as those previously mentioned in the discussion of Leaf Rapids, yet employees should also have the desire and motivation to develop their own programs and plans that assist them to move into supervisory and managerial positions. In 2010, the State of California employees and supervisors produced a booklet entitled, “Guide on Preparing to Become a First-Level State Supervisor.” This human resources “modernization” project is not specific to First Nations or even to minorities; however, it represents a systemic approach that could be utilized by RSNs. The goal of the guide was to find “the right people for the right jobs and to develop and maintain the skills needed to lead a high performing workforce (2010). The guide is divided into six categories, these categories include:

-getting started: background information about the guide;

-leadership readiness assessment tool: assessing against performance requirements and competencies;

-leadership competency development activities: resources to assist with leadership skill development;

-performance appraisal summary: individual development plan templates;

-guidance for supervisors and managers: how to develop a good individual development plan and performance appraisal;

-guidance for staff: how does the guide and program help them prepare to become supervisors?

The guide's simple language and layout promote easy reading and information usage. It also provides essential information for those seeking to move into managerial and supervisory positions. The document's framework can also be adopted to be used for RSNs in supervisory positions. Currently no information is available as related to cultural barriers for Aboriginals and RSNs in supervisory positions.

The final area of the literature review concerns employer opportunity and the benefits of hiring local RSNs. In an article in the magazine *Indian Life* (2012), economist Dr. Eric Howe states that Aboriginal employment can be increased using the role-model effect. Howe has examined the importance of role-modeling in the promotion of employment growth. According to his theory "when one Aboriginal person is hired, it leads to the hiring of an additional one and a half Aboriginal people (p. 1)." The article explains that when individuals see the increase in a newly-hired employee's standard of living, they strive to attain the same level or standard. If a business hires Aboriginal employees, the business will find that it is imperative to their success. Based on the information the article provides, one could assume that with a strong population of young Aboriginal people in Northern Saskatchewan, it is important that AREVA Resources Canada Inc. and Cameco Corporation continue their attempts at hiring RSNs at their mine sites.

In order for employers to see the success of hiring local people to work in their industries in all positions, a mechanism of measurement must be in place. The article, "Action Saskatchewan report card points to growing off-reserve Aboriginal employment," by Business Insights provides some of the parameters for measurement. Since 2005, the Saskatchewan Action

report card has been tracking employment data for the Aboriginal population living off reserve. The article is very brief in its explanation of how statistics are monitored, but it does discuss the need to track RSNs

currently employed in industry and those living in the Northern Saskatchewan Administrative District (NSAD) while working.

3) Scan of other resource industries and best practices (Northern Alberta-oil sands and North West Territories-diamonds)

In order to better understand the impacts of programs and practices employed by the uranium mining companies, a scan of other resource mining sector in Northern Alberta and the North West Territories was completed. Four operations by four different operators were selected. These sites were selected based on their proximity to Northern Saskatchewan and similarity of the local population and communities. Research consisted of a review of each company's website and published literature. As with the general literature review, minimal topic specific information was available. Company policies excluded the provision of information through interviews and therefore general public released information education, employment and training was used. No information was available on supports enhancing Aboriginal opportunity for supervisory positions and therefore general workforce development information was utilized as a comparison. It is also important to note that job classification and requirements differed between the diamond, oil and uranium industry. For the purpose of this study, occupations were compared to the best of their comparability.

The following operations were examined:



Map 2: Alberta Oil Sands

Northern Alberta oil sands, Operated by Cenovus Energy: Cenovus Energy 4 projects are located at Creek, Christina, Pelican and Narrows Lake.

Source: Cenovus Energy, 2013

North West Territories, Operated by Rio Tinto: the Diavik Diamond Mine and is located at Lac de Gras.

North West Territories, Operated by De Beers: the Snap Lake Diamond Mine and is located at Snap Lake.

North West Territories, Operated by Dominion Diamond Company: the EKATI Diamond Mine

is also located near the Lac de Gras area.



Map 3: NWT Diamond Mines

Source: Geology Central, 2013

It should be noted that although the regions and industries have similarities that allow for evaluation of programs, jurisdictional differences between the provinces and territories have an effect on the policy and programs in each region.

Cenovus Energy – Northern Alberta Oil Sands

Cenovus Energy strives to use local employees and businesses. They believe that this approach helps the company meet labour needs and contributes to enhanced local economic development. Cenovus has developed strong relationships with Aboriginal businesses near their oil sands developments in northeast Alberta. An example of these relationships is that of the contract with Primco Dene, a Cold Lake First Nations company that provides camp management services at Foster Creek and Christina Lake. Cenovus investments in Aboriginal-owned and joint venture businesses have tripled from \$86 million in 2009 to \$245 million in 2011, which represents about 9 percent of their total company expenditures. Cenovus Energy supports programs that allow the company to work with Aboriginal communities to identify gaps in education and training that are barriers to employment. The company believes in assisting Aboriginal people to gain access to employment opportunities not only at Cenovus, but within the oil industry. Some initiatives that Cenovus supports include:

Janvier Workforce Strategy: In collaboration with a number of industry partners, support the development of a workforce strategy for the community of Janvier. The strategy is focused on providing training and skill development as well as practical work experience for the members of the community.

LYNX: Aboriginal Student Career and Employment Program: Aboriginal Student Career and Employment Program through the University of Calgary. LYNX provides an opportunity for Aboriginal Students and recent graduates from Canadian post-secondary institutions to connect directly with potential employers who are seeking to recruit qualified Aboriginal employees for internships, co-ops, summer employment and full-time positions.

Soaring: Indigenous Youth Career Conference: This conference brings together Aboriginal students from across Alberta in grades 8-12 to give them the opportunity to meet industry experts and learn about different career options and how to pursue them. The intention of the conference is to increase the high school graduation rate of and subsequent employment among Indigenous youth as well as to facilitate the transition from school to employment.

Training Centres: Cenovus has provided funding for renovations and upgrading of training centres in the communities of Janvier and Bigstone Cree Nation. These renovations will allow for the communities to better serve their clients through skill development and training programs delivered right within the local community (Cenovus, 2013)

Note: No specific programs were identified specifically designed to increase Aboriginal or local participation in supervisory positions.

North West Territories Diamond Mining

All 3 operations examined provide detailed socio-economic monitoring agreement reports on their websites. These reports examine amongst others, the total number and occupation type of northern and Aboriginal employees. The Diavik and Snap Lake reports were released in 2013, while the EKATI diamond mine, who changed ownership from BHP Billiton to Diamond Dominion Corporation in 2013, latest available report is from 2009.

According to the NWT Government, a northern resident is one who:

- Who maintains a self-contained domestic establishment in the Northwest Territories other than a residence at a remote work site, and who primarily resides at that domestic establishment when not residing at a remote work site or attending an educational institution full time, and
- Has continuously been a Northwest Territories resident for a period of at least six months immediately prior to being hired, or
- Is an Aboriginal.

According to all 3 socio-economic monitoring agreement reports, the major barrier for northerners or Aboriginals mine site employment is that of education and skills.

Diavik Diamond Mine – Rio Tinto

Diavik's operations employment objectives are 66% northern and 40% Aboriginal. In total, of 1101 company employees, 424 were of northern or aboriginal background. In terms of professional occupations (middle management) and management (senior management), northerners or Aboriginals made up 81 of 121 or 67% of supervisory positions available at the Diavik mine site (direct comparison with uranium industry proportions is a challenge because of the difference in the residency definition and the differences in proportions of Aboriginal people in NWT compared to northern Saskatchewan – 48% in the NWT compared to 83% in northern Saskatchewan) Owner and operator RIO TINTO strives towards increases in northern employment and supervisory positions by:

Workplace Learning Centre: Diavik maintains a workplace learning centre at the mine site. The centre is intended to help employees build their skills in tasks directly related to their daily work role including computer and academic skills. A training adviser is available to provide learning support to apprentices who are preparing to attend technical training. In addition, the workplace learning centre is the first point of contact for new employees and contractors (Rio Tinto, 2013)

Northern Leadership Program: To help increase the number of qualified Aboriginal people at the supervisory and management level, Diavik developed an Aboriginal development program in partnership with SAIT Polytechnic. The program includes Diavik and contractor employees. As well as covering the customized curriculum which is based on Rio Tinto leadership competencies, participants are matched with a Diavik supervisor for mentoring. Since 2005, 67 individuals have completed the program. All graduates receive a certificate from SAIT recognizing their achievement. In 2010, Diavik expanded the program and two individuals with

De Beers Canada completed the program. In 2011, the program transitioned to Aurora College. As of 2012, 9 employees were enrolled in the leadership program (Rio Tinto, 2013).

Skilled Trades: Diavik utilizes its apprenticeship program to increase skills and provide opportunities for northern and Aboriginal employees. Diavik has committed to train between 8 and 18 apprentices annually. As of 2012, Diavik supported 30 apprentices; 27 are northern and 13 aboriginal. 4 Diavik apprentices are working towards dual journeyperson certifications. Since 2003, 34 apprentices have completed their apprenticeships at Diavik and achieved journeyperson certifications from the NWT government (Rio Tinto, 2013).

Snap Lake Diamond Mine – De Beers

The newest diamond mine in the NWT started production in 2008. Currently the mine site employs 276 Aboriginals and northerners out of a possible 757 employees or 36%. In terms of supervisory positions, 20 of 45 or 44% belong to northerners or Aboriginals. De Beers employs the following programs that assist the northern labour force to increase their capacity:

Learning Centre: The learning centre is a resource centre for employees who wish to learn on their own time. The annual training budget for Snap Lake also includes funds to support employee professional development. The fund enables employees to enroll in professional development programs that can be either taken as web-based or off-site programs. 20 Northern employees were pursuing opportunities with the companies support as of 2012 (De Beers 2013).

The Facets of Leadership Program: A series of two-day courses covering areas such as health and safety, team building, communication and conflict resolution. The program is spread over a year and accommodates shift rotations and lets people use what they have learned before taking the next course. 29 northerners or Aboriginals have taken the course since its inception (De Beers 2013).

EKATI Diamond Mine – Diamond Dominion Company

The EKATI site is the oldest diamond mine operating in NWT since 1998. As of 2009, 773 of 1457 or 53% of the workforce was of northern or Aboriginal background. Of the total workforce, 80 or 48% of the total 167 supervisory positions belonged to northerners or Aboriginals. According to the Diamond Dominion Company, the following statement summarized the company's need to increase the northern or Aboriginal workforce:

“BHP Billiton and its Contractors are committed to the development of Aboriginal and Other Northern residents of the NWT. To help meet this commitment BHP Billiton sponsors a wide range of employee training programs as well as apprenticeships. These include an extensive orientation program, safety training, cross cultural awareness training, as well as mine-based training progression programs, apprenticeship and support for students in post-secondary studies. In addition to these programs, BHP Billiton provides opportunities for students through summer employment and co-op educational programs (Diamond Dominion Company, 2009).”

4) Company (AREVA Resources Canada Inc. and Cameco Corporation) program review through documents and interviews

AREVA Resources Canada Inc. and Cameco Corporation each have innovative career guidance programs employed by their corporate office and mine sites human resources departments. Several of the programs are RSN specific but the majority is for all employees.

Both companies participate in annual evaluations of their employees, which give employees the opportunity to identify future aspirations and goals. Follow-up is performed with employees when positions become available and they meet specified criteria.

Aside from various in-house and external training opportunities offered by the companies, three main programs highlight the programs that RSNs have access to. While the scan of other resource industries examines general education and employment (due to information availability), the uranium mining research concentrates on specific supervisory material. General details regarding education, employment and training can be found in the CVMPP study “The Socio-Economic Impacts of the Modern Era of Uranium Mining on Northern Saskatchewan (2013)” at www.cvmpp.ca.

These programs are:

A. Employee Career Development Program (Cameco): This contracted third party program by Cameco is an internally-focused career management program that allows employees to map and grow their careers within Cameco. It is a 6 step program that combines assessments, workshops and individuals meetings with career consultants. The program is delivered in 4 half-day workshops and 2 meetings with a careers consultant. The goal of the program is to encourage employee progression in a concrete and structured manner and strives towards “that better career choices mean satisfied and engaged employees, who positively contribute to your organization (2013).”

B. Supervisory Training Program (AREVA): This program takes a handful of senior employees and provides supervisory training to RSNs in various areas of mine operations. According to Mark Campbell, Senior Human Resource Specialist, McClean Lake Operation,

“employees are taken off the floor and provided instruction in supervisory theory, mentoring and performance evaluation. These employees are then ready for promotion when an opportunity arises (2013).” Employees for the Supervisory Training Program are chosen on a combination of self-identification during their annual review, their managers identifying them and through performance evaluations. An example of this programs success is that in 2012, 4 RSN mill lead hands were accepted into the program and now all 4 are now mill supervisors. It is AREVA’s hope that the program will expand and produce more RSN supervisors as the need arises (AREVA, 2013).

C. Career Transition Program (Cameco): Cameco’s Career Transition Program is an RSN specific program where employees have the opportunity to transition to other careers that are needed by industry. The transition program pays for schooling and provides partial salary and summer employment for the chosen candidate. Each person is selected on a case-by-case basis and because of the cost; the number of positions is limited. Examples of this program’s success include an individual who began his career in mill operations and took part in the transition program to become an engineer.

AREVA Resources Canada Inc. and Cameco Corporation are continuously creating and employing new training and career programs that support RSNs striving to become supervisors and managers. This willingness to create support programs is one of industry strongest traits as it pertains to increasing the number of RSNs in supervisory positions.

5) **Interview with AREVA Resources Canada Inc. and Cameco Corporation corporate and mine site human resources personnel.**

As part of the research for this report, seven interviews were conducted with corporate and mine human resources personnel. The seven interviewees were made up of four males (two AREVA/ two Cameco) and three females (two AREVA/ one Cameco). Experience ranged from personnel having one to 28 years of industry experience with either company. Of the seven interviewees, two are employed as northern affairs managers, two are mine site human resource personnel and three are employed in corporate human resources departments. In terms of demographic distribution, five of the seven were RSN and five of the seven were of First Nations/Metis ancestry. It is important to note that those who were not RSN were of both First Nations and non-First Nations background. Interviews took approximately 30 minutes and were conducted either in person (five of seven) and by telephone (two of seven). Participants were asked five questions and were expected to answer based on their knowledge and opinions relating to RSNs in supervisory positions. A list of the questions used in the interviews can be found in appendix A.

Interview Findings

Company Interview Findings

Analysis of the data obtained from the interviews resulted in three main areas of barriers and opportunities. The areas that represented a trend amongst all participants included barriers and opportunities to RSNs achieving supervisory position and what could be done to improve the numbers of RSNs as supervisors.

A). Barriers to RSNs to Reach Supervisory Positions in the Uranium Mining Industry

The following three main barriers have been identified through the interview process:

Education and Skills: A major barrier to RSNs moving into supervisory positions was felt to be that many lack the needed formal education and skills. High-school graduation and post-secondary attainment rates are substantially lower in Northern Saskatchewan than the province as a whole (Statistics Canada, 2006). The uranium mining industry is also becoming far more advanced and technical, requiring specialized training in various occupations. As indicated by Community Vitality Monitoring Partnership Process (CVMPP) study *The Socio-Economic Impacts of the Modern Era of Uranium Mining on Northern Saskatchewan,*” many of the barriers identified for post-secondary attainment stem from the challenges faced in the primary and secondary education systems (2013).” Therefore challenges associated with educational attainment are cross-generational and their solutions require a multi-faceted approach. The uranium mining industry is expected to be a long-term operation in Northern Saskatchewan and therefore it is imperative for RSNs to become educated and fill positions traditionally not filled by northern employees. The link between educational attainments and employment is evident by the low number of RSN’s in supervisory positions.

Lack of Experience: It was identified that a lack of experience is a barrier experienced by RSNs seeking supervisory positions with both uranium mining companies. Supervisory positions often require 5 to 10 years of experience in a specific occupation. The barrier of education compounds the issue of lack of experience as it is difficult for RSNs to move up the “chain of

command” if they lack the necessary training and qualifications. It was noted that when RSNs do move up in their position it is a “sink or swim” opportunity. Interviewees felt that RSNs were not given much support (such as mentorship) and their success is ultimately their responsibility. In mine sites where unions are active, they can also be viewed as a factor whether RSN’s have opportunities to gain experience. No stipulations are placed on RSNs to have first right of refusal for a promotion nor are they given preferential treatment.

Cultural and Societal Barriers: During the interviews, a common theme emerged that a protocol guide for a culturally supportive workplace is needed. Cultural misinterpretations and misunderstandings continue to occur at the mine sites despite the best efforts of both companies to mitigate them. Some of those employed at the mine sites are not aware of the lifestyles differences of RSNs and lack knowledge of the surrounding communities impacted by uranium mining. It was noted that RSNs may feel as if they will be viewed negatively by their fellow RSNs if they become their supervisors by being promoted. It was also noted that that some RSNs do not wish to become supervisors and are content with their current positions despite previous offers to move into supervisory positions.

B). Opportunities for RSNs to Reach Supervisory Positions in the Uranium Mining

Industry

The following 3 main opportunities have been identified through the interview process:

Company Programs: As indicated in the career guidance program review section, AREVA Resources Canada Inc. and Cameco Corporation are employing several unique and exciting career initiatives that may assist RSNs in obtaining supervisory positions. Programs such as

AREVA's Supervisory Training Program and Cameco's Career Transition Program are substantial financial investments into RSNs and the company's long-term recruitment and retention plans. These programs strive to increase the number of RSNs employed and have a direct socio-economic impacts on Northern Saskatchewan.

Management Attitude: Interviewees suggested that the overall attitude of the management team towards increasing the number of RSN supervisors is positive and engaged. Management strives to create creative opportunities for RSNs and is "willing to make it work whenever possible." Most managers value the importance of engaging the northern labour force and acknowledge the economic benefits associated with hiring local people to all mining industry positions. Examples of managers creating opportunities for RSNs are the programs being offered and ongoing dialogue to best ensure that RSNs are thriving in their positions. Their willingness to have a personal but professional connection to the employees enables positive two-way communication, making most RSNs comfortable and willing to bring forth concerns and ideas.

Role Models and Mentoring: As of 2012, 71 RSNs were in supervisory positions in the uranium mining industry. These individuals act as great role models for fellow industry employees and in their respective communities. Youth are inspired to be successful individuals as those who are in senior positions in the uranium mining industry. As indicated in the CVMPP's socio-economic study, "northerners interviewed felt that the uranium mining industry has provided some of the greatest sources of economic stability for northern families (2013)." When northerners see others doing well, they are more inclined to strive towards the same for themselves. Role models can also be available for mentoring opportunities. Industry currently

has limited mentoring programs and when RSNs can mentor off one another, it can be assumed that the success rates of those in mentoring programs will increase.

C). Potential Future Opportunities

Interviewees were asked the question “what can be done differently as the uranium mining industry moves into the future in regard to encouraging RSNs to move into supervisory roles?”

All those interviewed overwhelmingly stated that industry should continue to support the existing programs in place and expand those with significant success rates. Other potential future opportunities to increasing the number of RSN supervisors mentioned by the representatives include:

- better coordination of information of those able to move into supervisory positions between mine sites
- education system investments
- mentoring and apprentice opportunities
- additional incentives (monetary, benefits, etc.) for RSN’s moving into supervisory positions

It is important to note that all of those interviewed shared optimism for the future of RSNs being employed in the uranium mining industry and the belief that it is crucial to tap into the young Northern Saskatchewan labour force for all stakeholders involved.

Research Summary

The following is a summary of the areas undertaken by this report:

General “aboriginal and employment” literature review

- Outlined the benefits of a “Workplace Protocol Guide for Industry and Employers of Indigenous Queenslanders” (2010) published by the Queensland government in Australia and how it can be related to the uranium mining industry.
- The company benefits of hiring local and Aboriginal employees.
- The need for a conducive workplace environment.

Scan of other mining industries and best practices (Northern Alberta-oil sands and North West Territories-diamonds).

- Extensive leadership development programs
- Interactive and supportive learning centres
- Focus on apprenticeship

Company (AREVA Resources Canada Inc. and Cameco Corporation) Program Review

- Supervisory Training Program – AREVA Resources Canada Inc.
- Career Transition Program – Cameco Corporation

Interview Findings

- Opportunities: programs in place, management attitude and role models and mentoring
- Barriers: education and skills, lack of experience and mentorship and cultural and societal issues.

Report Limitations

The report had several limitations. This report examined the factors to “Supervisory Positions in the Uranium Industry: Opportunities and Challenges for Residents of Saskatchewan’s North,” from an industry perspective. It would be beneficial to further interview RSN employees and supervisors, company training departments and education institutions for their opinions and insights in subsequent study phases. A lack of published literature relating to the report topic also provided challenges and comparative mining companies provided minimal information as per their information sharing policies. It is important to note that both oil and diamond industries are more economically important to their respective jurisdictions than uranium mining in the Province of Saskatchewan and therefore this may result in greater attention being provided to the impacts of these activities. Finally, the number of company representatives could be expanded to re-assess trends amongst the challenges and opportunities in terms of RSN supervisory employment.

Report Recommendations

Based on the research conducted in this report, “Supervisory Positions in the Uranium Industry: Opportunities and Challenges for Residents of Saskatchewan’s North,” several recommendations are aimed at increasing the number of RSNs in supervisory positions. Some of the recommendations build on the programs and supports already in place by AREVA Resources Canada Inc. and Cameco Corporation, while others are aimed at areas where new action may be taken. The following recommendations include two that are general recommendations geared towards increasing employment, two that are specific to increasing RSNs in supervisory positions and one is for both:

- 1) **Education**: Industry significantly invests dollars into post-secondary programs and scholarships. However, according to the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, only half of Northern Saskatchewan children are ready to learn by the time they reach the age of five (2011). Therefore, based on the long term nature of the uranium industry, it is encouraged that the uranium mining industry partner and invest (where appropriate) in early childhood development and primary education.
- 2) **Apprentice and Training**: It is recommended that industry build on their apprenticeship and training programs it already has in place. RSNs have traditionally excelled by on the job training and apprenticeship opportunities (Statistics Canada, 2012) and therefore, the uranium mining industry expand and set a realistic goal of increasing the number of apprentice and on the job training opportunities for RSNs at their mine sites.
- 3) **Mentoring Programs**: Industry should encourage additional mentoring and role-model opportunities. It is recommended that RSN mentoring and role-modeling programs such

as job shadowing, be employed at the mines sites that encourage RSNs to strive towards supervisory positions.

- 4) **Leadership Program:** Industry is currently utilizing several well serving career development programs at their sites. In order to complement that, it is recommended that the uranium mining industry develop and implement a RSN specific (potential consideration of northern and First Nations culture and socio-economics) leadership program to be used within their corporate structure.
- 5) **RSN Workplace Protocol:** It is recommended that in order to compliment ‘Respectful’ work place training already offered, that the uranium mining companies should employ RSN workplace protocol training for all employees in their respected companies to mitigate cultural and societal workplace issues.



Photo Courtesy: AREVA Resources Canada Inc.

Conclusion

The report “Supervisory Positions in the Uranium Industry: Opportunities and Challenges for Residents of Saskatchewan’s North,” attempts to identify barriers and opportunities by examining the companies perspective on the issue, researching general literature and comparing what other resource mining companies are doing in terms of northern and Aboriginal employment strategies. It is important to note that the general literature review and scan of other mining operations did not yield comparative data with the uranium mining industry. Exploring the opinions and experiences of RSN employees is also recommended before any implementation of recommendations should occur. As indicated throughout the report, the uranium mining industry is expected to remain a source of economic prosperity for Northern Saskatchewan long into the future. It is vital the uranium mining companies seize the opportunity of Northern Saskatchewan’s young demographic. Despite the challenges identified a wide range of positive results have already been achieved and there is definite optimism and good momentum to continue to make progress in this area. The optimistic opinions and thoughts of those interviewed provide true testament to the ongoing creative work being done by AREVA Resources Canada Inc. and Cameco Corporation.

Appendix A

AREVA/Cameco Personnel Interview

Date: _____

Method of Interview: In person/ Phone

Name:

Male/Female

Company:

Years of Experience:

Background Education:

RSN/First Nations?

- 1) What are some of the programs employed by your current company to increase the number of RSNs in supervisory positions?
- 2) What are 5 barriers for RSNs to reach supervisory positions?
- 3) What are 5 opportunities for RSNs to reach supervisory positions?
- 4) What are some of the future opportunities?
- 5) Is there anything else you would like to add?

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