

New Challenges to Mineral Exploration Assistance and Liaison in 2020-2021

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During the 2020-21 fiscal year, geologists Ron Mills and Geoff Baldwin continued to carry out the Nova Scotia Geological Survey's shared Industry Liaison Program, as well as maintaining other duties. Mineral industry liaison activities were challenged during the past year by pandemic travel regulations, making many types of exploration investment and promotion activities impossible. Nonetheless, the department's liaison work continued to seek out investment to build growth in the provincial mineral sector as restrictions from the pandemic wax and wane, with eventual lifting as the vaccination routine becomes more prolific.

Because of COVID-19 restrictions, both the AMEBC Round Up in Vancouver and the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada Convention (PDAC; Fig. 1) in Toronto were virtual events in 2021. As a consequence, the limitations

on networking and promotional activities at these major events were substantial, and in some cases prohibitive. In an effort to provide the customary level of engagement, and to promote Nova Scotia's mineral resources and opportunities, a series of narrated PowerPoint presentations were developed to outline the appeal of mineral investment in Nova Scotia, its unique mineral exploration opportunities, as well as the highly competitive advantages and services offered by the Department of Energy and Mines. These presentations were used to enhance the impact of Nova Scotia's virtual presence at these shows. Unfortunately, however, the virtual convention space proved a poor platform, resulting in low levels of engagement at both shows. Representatives of government and industry look forward to next year and the possibility of these events being held in-person, offering the opportunity to participate again in the



Figure 1. Nova Scotia prospectors promoting their properties at PDAC 2020, just before travel restrictions ensued.

success of the “Canada’s Atlantic Edge” events held at prior trade shows. These events highlight the Atlantic Canada mineral sector through an Atlantic Canada Day event. The Atlantic Canadian Mining Alliance, the joint government-industry working group responsible for these events, has been active over the last year, including heavy involvement in a Critical Minerals in Atlantic Canada Webinar held on 12 April 2021, organized by the Crown corporation Invest in Canada, in conjunction with the United States departments of State and Commerce, to introduce US-based investors to the mining sector in Atlantic Canada. Hopefully, this webinar will be the first of many events organized for this audience.

The smaller Atlantic trade shows, which strengthen ties to neighboring provinces and the companies that work there, were also held virtually. By any measure these were significantly more successful

than the large national and international mining events. By supporting local industry associations, the department hopes to see a continuation of the excellent work being carried out by the Mining Association of Nova Scotia, and maintaining ties with other provincial surveys in New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador through their respective events, such as the Mineral Resources Review held in St. John’s. Mineral-tourism events, such as the Nova Scotia Gem and Mineral Show, did not fare so well, as both shows for 2020 and 2021 were cancelled.

As pandemic restrictions lift and industry focuses again on exploration, liaison with exploration parties and investors will continue to form an important conduit for all of the components necessary for mineral exploration.