

The New

BRITANNIA

BC Museum of Mining one of British Columbia's crown jewels and mining legacy site



The Britannia transformation is to be completed summer 2010.

Industry and community support transforms a relic of the past to a landmark for the future

Mining is one of British Columbia's largest and oldest industries and has and will continue to play an important role in the establishment and development of the province. A fitting example of a mining legacy is the treasured story of the Britannia Mines and the BC Museum of Mining located in Britannia Beach near Squamish.

The Britannia Mines first opened in 1904 and by 1929, it was the largest copper producer in the British Empire. Throughout the years, copper, gold, silver, lead, zinc and cadmium were extracted. The mine was eventually shut down in 1974 due to the economy and increasing operating costs.

During the seventy-year life of Britannia Mines, 60,000 people from more than 50 nations and cultures, worked and made their homes in the community. Although Britannia was quite isolated with the area, only accessible by boat until the railway was built in 1956 and the highway in 1958, life was never dull. A thriving social calendar saw sporting events, theatrical productions, dances, movies and parties held throughout the year.

With the support of the mining industry and the provincial and federal governments, the Britannia Beach Historical Society opened the BC Museum of Mining in 1975.

Our goal today is to promote mining awareness through experiential education programs, historic collection preservation and public engagement about the environment and sustainability issues.

KIRSTIN CLAUSEN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE MUSEUM

The prominent and popular historical and tourist destination today includes 15 historic buildings and an underground mining tunnel and train ride. Visitors and school tour groups enjoy daily mining demonstrations and hands-on activities, gold panning, and historical mining exhibits.

In 1988, Mill 3 was designated as a National Historic Site and is one of the last remaining gravity-fed concentrator mills in North America. The Museum Site is also recognized as an important historic landmark within British Columbia.

"In Britannia Beach, it wasn't until the early 2000's that the community began to benefit from the proactive support from the government and the mining industry. Very quickly a solution was planned and implemented. The result is an environmental success story of what can be achieved when public and private groups work together to achieve the same goal."

In 2004, the Province of BC commissioned EPCOR to build and operate a water treatment plant. The EPCOR Britannia Mine Water Treatment Plant uses natural materials to filter minerals and neutralize surface water runoff collected from the area, resulting in clean water flowing into Howe Sound.

Mining has come a long way in terms of how they view the environment since the industry began in BC and elsewhere. In the historic sense miners did not intentionally set out to cause negative environmental impacts; today there is a continual process of learning in the industry, being responsive to modern values and standards and ensuring that mining practices are healthy, sustainable and environmentally sound.

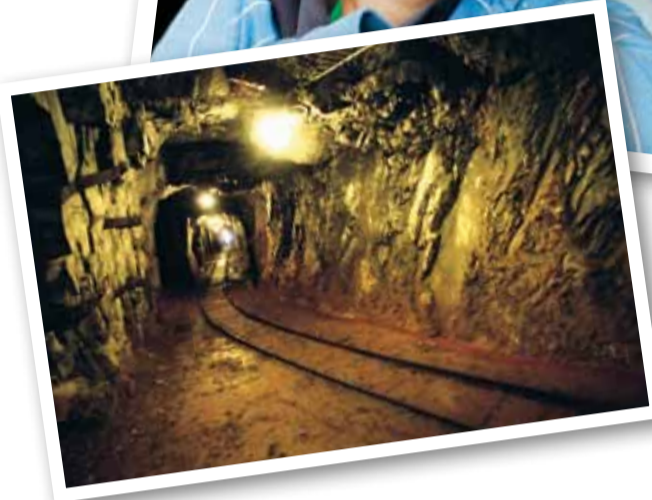
BOB DICKISON
MUSEUM BOARD CO-VICE CHAIR & CHAIRMAN, HUNTER DICKINSON INC.

David Lane, Co-Chair of the Board of Directors for the Museum, noted that there has always been a Board commitment to the environmental cleanup of Britannia Beach.

"We have worked diligently in partnership with the Province of BC and industry leaders to support a remediation plan that works and to educate others about our environmentally sustainable measures," said Lane.

"The Museum is proud to work with EPCOR to develop the education component of the EPCOR Britannia Mine Water Treatment Plant and to deliver these educational tours."

Another area where the Museum proactively makes a responsible environmental choice is in rehabilitating and repurposing existing historic buildings rather than demolishing and building new. There is a continual effort to use local suppliers so that there is a reduced environmental impact and a strengthening of the local economy.



The mining tunnel, part of the underground train ride.

The new and enhanced Museum will become a destination that tourists and locals can enjoy for an afternoon or a day. The location, exhibits and guided tour offers visitors of all ages a unique adventure and an unforgettable experience.

PHIL ALDRICH
PROJECT DIRECTOR
ALDRICHPERS ASSOCIATES

In 2005, a restoration project began on the Mill 3 building. The scope of the project was enormous; it included stabilizing the concrete foundations, re-roofing each level, re-glazing the windows, and re-siding the building. A labour of love, each of the 14,416 panes of glass was hand-puttied into the frames to maintain its heritage.

The newly renovated Site will feature exciting new venues for local arts and culture, restored heritage buildings, historic research and preservation, education exhibits and services, fun family entertainment and engagement about mining.

"This is an exciting time not only for the Museum, but also BC's tourism and mining industry, extracurricular school programs and historical buffs like myself," said Clausen.

Made possible by generous contributions from the mining industry, the provincial and federal governments and private donations, the rejuvenated Museum is scheduled for completion in the late summer of 2010.

The Museum's existence, ongoing restoration through what we call the Britannia Project, wouldn't have been possible without the continued support of the mining industry, government and our community partners. Britannia is an important part of BC's history and we're committed to ensuring that these stories are shared and remembered for generations to come.

MICHAEL MCPHIE
MUSEUM CO-CHAIR
& CEO OF CURIS RESOURCES LTD.



The Museum is breaking ground and is reinventing the BC Museum of Mining. A \$14.7-million three-phase redevelopment project will transform a mining legacy and National Historic Site into a vibrant internationally recognized destination.

This project was made possible by the generous contribution from:

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www.bcomm.ca

The Museum is a non-profit organization and is currently open for guided underground tours. Located in Britannia Beach along the Sea to Sky Highway. Toll-free 1-800-896-4044

