



# Workforce Development at Greens Creek

## Building the Future Now



Presented to the Southeast Conference by Ron Plantz  
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## What Will We Cover Today?

- Quick overview of Greens Creek & Hecla
- Greens Creek impacts on the economy
- Why workforce development?
- Goals of workforce development
- Progress to date through internal efforts and external partnerships
- Concluding thoughts



## Greens Creek at a Glance

- Owned by Hecla Mining Company, Coeur d'Alene, ID
- Underground mine and surface concentrator
- Pristine environmental locale (National Monument)
- Polymetallic ore body (silver, zinc, lead & gold)
- Dore' and three concentrates produced (lead, zinc & bulk)
- Smelter customers around the world in Japan, Korea, Canada, Mexico, Belgium, and China
- Sustained operation, around for 20+ years and reserves for at least ten more!



# Greens Creek Impacts on the Economy

- McDowell socio-economic studies, 2004, 2006 and 2008
- Largest private sector employer in Juneau
- 340+ employees; >500 total direct and indirect jobs
- Over \$32M pay and benefits; average earnings of \$92,000
- Over \$20M purchases and contracted services
- Over \$50K in philanthropic contributions & scholarships
- CBJ property taxes of over \$1.3 million; several million \$ in Alaska Minerals License Tax



# Why Workforce Development?

- There are many critical skill shortages in the US mining industry, now and into the future, in large part due to an aging workforce
- Changing dynamic of the skills needed as new technology is developed
- Workforce development is challenged by changing growth cycle within the industry – traditionally short, but now experiencing an overall sustained growth cycle which dramatically impacts workforce planning



# Goals of Workforce Development

- Develop career interests early!
- Create clear and accessible career pathways for new and existing employees
- Develop and Alaskan-based labor pool for key vocational and professional roles
- Skill enhancement and alignment to new technology
- Once you've got them – retain them!



# Develop Career Interests Early

- Kids need to know their career options and opportunities!
  - Middle school tours
    - Sixty 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade science students annually
  - Guest lecturers in high schools
    - Engineers and safety professionals
  - Science fair mentors and prizes
    - Focus on sustainable development projects
  - High school career fairs
    - “Hot Jobs” info from the Alaska Department of Labor





# Create Clear, Accessible Career Pathways

- Clear, well-defined career pathways attract and retain employees and allow for succession planning
  - Entry-level miner training provides modern mining overview
  - Pay for skills “tech progression” system
  - Internal miner training bridges the gap to full-fledged miner
  - Apprenticeship programs for electricians; working on mechanics
  - Professional development/tuition assistance





# Develop an Alaskan-Based Labor Pool

- Scholarships & internships provide incentives for Alaskans to seek in-state employment
  - University of Alaska Fairbanks
    - Mining engineers, geologists
  - University of Alaska Anchorage
    - Geologists
  - University of Alaska Southeast
    - Diesel technology students
  - AVTEC
    - Electricians and mechanics





# Skill Enhancement/Alignment to New Technology

- As the technology used by the industry changes, critical skills must be updated
  - University of Alaska Southeast/  
MAPTS
    - Hydraulics
    - Preventive maintenance
    - Electrical
    - HVAC
  - Soon to arrive: simulators!





# Once you've got them – retain them!

- Implement strategies to prevent loss of knowledge by those retiring or leaving
- Use innovative rewards and benefits structures to increase employee loyalty and commitment
- Incorporate flexible learning opportunities into the workplace
- Effectively communicate and engage employees





# Concluding Thoughts

- Workforce development challenges within the mining industry have been compounded by changing growth cycles
- Mining operations must partner with community, academic and government to build a training culture that is conducive to providing employees with the skills they need to perform their work safely and productively
- Make professional development fun as you build the future now!