

Northwestern Ontario Prospectors Association's Awards Dinner Message

Welcome delegates and exhibitors to the Annual Awards Dinner at the 2015 Northwestern Ontario Mines and Minerals Symposium. The Organizing Committee, led by Garry Clark, hope you have a successful convention; make some new connections through networking; gain some new insights from the excellent line-up of speakers; and visit the many commercial exhibitors. However, most importantly, option a property from one of the prospectors here who have worked hard to bring their discoveries to your attention.

Our theme "TURNING THE CORNER?" was selected in January following some positive indications in the industry. We thought that by the time of the Convention we would be well on our way to a recovery, I guess that is why we inserted the question mark (?) as we have not yet made the "TURN" to better times.

These tough times are very hard on our prospectors and developers and their families. As well, the ripple effects on the economies of the many northern towns which traditionally derive some of their economic wealth from exploration activities are feeling the pinch. In these down times it is a good time to do your professional development so that you are ready to go out prospecting when our industry "Turns the Corner".

On a brighter note, tonight we are pleased to acknowledge this year's Award Winners. The recipients represent our industry well as leaders in their field of exploration, development and/or service to our Association.

I would also like to thank the volunteers who help make NWOMMS one of the best events in Ontario and to the NWOPA Directors for their dedication on behalf of the membership in advocating for the prospector in these trying times of change.

Recently, I was talking to an old prospector friend of mine who had a tale to tell me of his recent "Road Trip". He told me of his preparations for the trip which was going to be one of his last excursions to find the "Big One". First, he went to see the geologists on James Street down in the basement and asked them for the latest information on an area he had prospected many, many years ago but had never been able to return to since the price of gold had improved. After spending a few hours with the geologists he was loaded up with geology maps and some good personal advice about local conditions. Now he was ready to hit the road. Late the next day after following the GPS directions carefully, he found himself at a fork in the road that was not indicated on his GPS. He eventually made a decision but proceeded with caution as he had lost the GPS signal. He told me he wished he didn't have to rely on gadgets to get him to where he wanted to go but since the new claim staking regulations were going to be based on GPS coordinates he thought he had better learn how to use the GPS. Soon he was really lost, he must have taken a wrong turn at the last corner. The prospector blamed all his troubles on the New Mining Act, the government made changes when changes were not necessary.

The next day while travelling on his new route he was faced with a convoy of white 1/2 ton trucks heading in the opposite direction. The prospector told me that all he saw where the letters MNR and MNDM

on the truck's doors. Once again his thoughts turned to the New Mining Act, he was going one way and the government was heading in the other direction. He mused about the last stakeholders meeting he had attended where the general consensus was that industry and government were on the same page. I told him "I know what you are saying, I understand what you are thinking". So once again he turned around and headed back to the corner and tried the other road. All the while, he was losing valuable prospecting time.

I asked him what he did next. He said you wouldn't believe it. I asked him to tell me more. He said "as I was nearing my destination, out of the blue, I came across a Toll Booth. The sign indicated the charges to proceed were determined to be 2 % of the cost of my Road Trip". This didn't sit well with him considering he was on an Ontario Highway on Crown Lands. Once again, he turned around and headed back to try another road all the while still blaming the New Mining Act.

Finally, things seem to be improving, the road was good, the sun was shining and up ahead he saw a Highway sign reading "Welcome to Manitoba".

Enjoy the Symposium and thank you for your continued support. Good luck in the field and I hope to see you again next year when surely the industry will have "Turned the Corner".

Bob Chataway

President, NWOPA