

New protocol could mean more jobs for First Nations communities

# Mining deal to ease consultations

**LAW & ORDER**  
POLICE SEIZE COCAINE,  
CASH IN DRUG BUST

LARRY KUSCH

**T**HE Progressive Conservative government is encouraging First Nation communities to reap the benefits of new Manitoba mining projects in their traditional territories.

The province announced Monday that it is working with Indigenous communities on a new protocol that will guide consultations between the province and First Nations on future mining development.

Premier Brian Pallister announced Monday that Norway House Cree Nation Chief Ron Evans and former Manitoba cabinet minister Jim Downey will develop the new mineral development protocol in partnership with First Nations.

The goal is to establish “a clear pathway forward on mineral development with a stable and predictable consultation process,” he said.

“This will also provide a shared opportunity to enhance public confidence in the mineral sector and the necessary assurance that Manitoba is the right place for business to invest, build and grow,” the premier said.

“First Nations communities must be

involved in all aspects of mineral development, and share in the benefits resulting from projects, while ensuring that Aboriginal and treaty rights are protected.”

Downey said that a mutually agreed-to mineral development protocol could lead to new jobs and wealth for First Nation communities.

“I am extremely pleased to work with Chief Evans, whose leadership and determination has been a huge part of the North,” he said in a statement.

Evans said First Nation leaders and communities need to be directly involved in the process of mineral exploration and development.

“We need to be involved as nations, employees, managers and as companies providing services and supplies. I look forward to working on this initiative.”

The new protocol will define how consultations are to occur during various phases of mineral development, including grassroots exploration, “mechanized disturbance,” advanced exploration and mine development, the province said in a news release.

“It will give greater certainty to companies interested in mineral development in Manitoba, as the different phases

of development have dramatically different impacts on the exercise of Aboriginal and treaty rights,” the release said. This protocol will ensure that potential adverse effects to Aboriginal and treaty rights will be clearly articulated and addressed during consultation processes in all phases of mineral development in the province, it added.

Indigenous and Municipal Relations Minister Eileen Clarke said many First Nation communities have expressed a strong interest in participating in resource development projects but face significant barriers that could be addressed through improved relationships, earlier and more frequent communications with government and industry representatives, a clearer understanding of the benefits to their communities and a more formalized role in the development of these projects.

Pallister said the new process “will advance reconciliation by fostering a mutually respectful relationship between the Crown and Indigenous peoples.” He said it will also provide mineral exploration and mining industries with “a clear understanding of the requirements and processes for min-

eral development projects in Indigenous traditional territories.”

Andrea McLandress, executive director of the Mining Association of Manitoba, called the planned discussions between the province and First Nations “a very positive development.”

“Our industry welcomes positive relationships between the Crown and Indigenous communities. We also are enthusiastically in support of any certainty and predictability in permitting (mine permit) processes,” she said.

Sheila North Wilson, grand chief of Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, which represents northern First Nations, said she also welcomes the development of a protocol for consultations with First Nations on prospective mine development.

“With chiefs like Ron Evans at the table, I think they have a lot to learn from him. It’s a good move,” she said.

North Wilson agreed that a new protocol that respects Indigenous rights could make First Nations more open to certain mine developments and create new business opportunities for First Nations people.

[larry.kusch@freepress.mb.ca](mailto:larry.kusch@freepress.mb.ca)

WINNIPEG police seized nearly \$10,000 worth of cocaine and \$150,000 in cash from an apartment in the 100 block of Smith Street on Friday.

The police’s organized crime unit searched the apartment after obtaining a Controlled Drugs and Substances Act search warrant, also found over 550 grams of cutting agent, packaging material, cooking utensils and several digital scales.

Police spokesman Const. Jay Murray said it’s believed the cocaine was being “stepped on” — mixed with the cutting agent — to create the volume and weight of drugs available to be trafficked. It’s not known to whom exactly the cocaine was being trafficked.

Police arrested two people who have known gang associations and were “very well known to police.”

Willy Solomon Gooding, 29, and Sophia R. Kattenar, 31, have both been charged with production of a scheduled substance, possession of a scheduled substance for the purpose of trafficking and the possession of proceeds of property obtained by crime valued at over \$5,000. Gooding was also charged with 18 counts of failure to comply with court order. Both suspects were detained in custody.