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Entrevue avec Randy Hawes, ministre d'état pour les mines de la C.-B.

No guts, no glory

How one CIM member breathed new life back into Prince George's mining community

By Robbie Pillo

Three years after the CIM North Central BC Branch in Prince George, British Columbia, had shut its doors, tenacious CIM member Greg Rasmussen decided that it was time to step up and make a difference. Having attended the neighbouring CIM South Central BC Branch's Annual Meeting in Kamloops and witnessing its tremendous success, Rasmussen realized the future looked promising for Prince George's mining community and embarked on a journey to revitalize the once dormant branch. "The mining industry within the Prince George area was active, but it needed to remain connected," recalls Rasmussen. In November 2007, after months of intense work, Rasmussen single-handedly delivered the jumping point that catapulted the branch back onto the networking scene.

For his singular efforts in organizing the inaugural one-day conference, Rasmussen received the CIM District 6 Distinguished Service Award this past May. From registration management to booking presenters, Rasmussen did it all. "At first, I was oblivious to what was involved and as it got more entailed, it grew into more work," recalls Rasmussen. "But, as I have been known to have a stubborn streak, I decided to follow it through. I just had to give it a try."

For most, organizing an event may seem like a daunting task, especially when tackling it alone. But for one who is coping with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), it can pose even greater challenges. "When I was growing up, coping with the disorder was hard on my parents," Rasmussen acquiesces. "But with time, I learned to cope with it and actually became really good at multitasking." When it came to organizing the conference, Rasmussen took it one step at



Rasmussen receiving award at this past year's CIM Conference & Exhibition from then president of CIM Michael Allan.

a time, selected the speakers according to local issues, made calls to promote the event, secured sponsorship and called upon CIM's Distinguished Lecturers Program to secure his keynote speaker.

The one-day conference drew over 50 delegates who listened to keynote speaker Glenn Nolan, former Chief of the Missanabie Cree First Nation, and six other technical presentations before gathering at a closing dinner. Rasmussen also chaired an annual general meeting and purposely held it during the lunch hour to ensure that all 50 delegates would be present to cast their votes and answer his call to action for branch executive volunteers — and it worked. A new executive was elected with Rasmussen at the helm.

Since then, the event has grown into an annual two-day conference and doubled in delegates, presentations and topics. A portion of the proceeds generated from the 2008 annual meeting went to support the Northern BC Friends of Children Society, a non-profit organization assisting families with children with extraordinary medical needs, a tradition that the branch has since kept.

Rasmussen's first brush with CIM conferences some years ago was a memorable one. When he moved to Huckleberry Mines as chief metallurgist, his new mill superintendent surprised him with the news that he was not only to attend the Annual Canadian Mineral Processors Operators' Conference (CMP) in Ottawa, but also expected to give a presentation. "He made it sound like he was sending me on a trip, but in reality, he had something else mind," he recalls, laughing. It was the first time Rasmussen ever spoke in front of large group and he ended up relishing the learning experience. The conference was a real eye opener as to the benefits of being part of a professional organization and the industry. "I have always been a strong supporter of CIM and its values," he says. "It provides an essential knowledge-sharing network."

Whether starting a new branch or rejuvenating a pre-existing one, the process is not an easy feat. Rasmussen suggests talking to other local branches and CIM National, which will provide support, contacts, ideas and help in promoting your event. "It was only after the branch was reinstated that I spoke to other local branches, particularly the CIM South Central BC Branch," he recalls. "I wish I had done it sooner."

In 2009, Rasmussen moved to Vancouver and has remained quite involved with his CIM family — he was Field Trip Chair of the CIM Conference and Exhibition 2010, regularly attends CIM Vancouver Branch meetings, and will pop into the local CIM branch meetings whenever in the Prince George and Kamloops areas. "Networking and gaining new knowledge and insights — this is what I retained from attending that first CMP meeting, and it is what CIM is all about." CIM

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