

NITA PRESENTS RESOURCE EXPO 2005

The Native Investment and Trade Association recently presented the annual Resource Expo 2005 at the Sheraton Vancouver Wall Centre Hotel. The well attended conference focused on the development of Canada's natural resources – mining, forestry and oil and gas. The conference is the largest, most high-profile Aboriginal resource event in Canada. Calvin Helin, President/CEO of the Native Investment and Trade Association, said, "The event is intended to explore opportunities for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal partnerships and wealth creation in the natural resources and business sectors."

In addition to premiers from Canada's Yukon, Nunavut and Northwest Territories giving talks, Alaska Governor Frank Murkowski also spoke.

Premier Dennis Fentie of the Yukon summed up the event by stating, "These conferences are the first step in developing the north," Fentie reported that mining exploration in the Yukon is booming with over 50 projects underway. He also stated that the Yukon government is keen to resolve Aboriginal land claims and pointed

out that three First Nations land claims settlements have already been signed.

In an effort to promote tourism, Premier Joe Handley of the Northwest Territories surprised many attendees by noting that there are now more Japanese tourists visiting his territory than southern-dwelling Canadians. He would like southerners to become more aware of the economic and tourism opportunities available in the north.

One of the major concerns of Canada's northern territories as well as Alaska is the proposed Mackenzie Valley and Alaska Highway pipeline projects. These projects would go a long way in delivering much needed oil and gas to points south as well as providing significant construction and permanent employment opportunities.



In addition to a stellar line-up of speakers, the conference featured a number of interesting booths for attendees to visit. Photo by Ellsworth Dickson



Rob Seeley, General Manager, Sustainable Development & External Affairs, Oil Sands Shell Canada Limited, provided much detailed information on the trials and tribulations of designing and building pipelines in the far north.

The speakers made it clear that in spite of occasional disagreements, Canada's western provinces and territories as well as Alaska not only share common borders, but also share common interests for developing their resources in an environmentally responsible and sustainable manner. However, before resource development can proceed, bringing much-needed, high-paying jobs for both Native and non-Natives, First Nations need to be involved in the planning process when development impacts their ancestral lands.

In addition to the interesting booths representing a variety of businesses and governments, speakers covered many other relevant topics: trade with Asia, the Terasen BC Coast Pipeline Project, unconventional gas potential in British Columbia, ethanol, biodiesel, electrical transmission projects and Aboriginal employment.

For more information on the activities of the Native Investment and Trade Association, contact Calvin Helin at 604-275-6670 or visit www.native-invest-trade.com. 