Norwest Forms New Company...Heavy Norwest

By Keith Wilson

Earlier this year Norwest and our partner, Heavy North, formed a new company named Heavy Norwest. This new entity is the result of intensive work by many Norwest and Heavy North employees. In our latest strategic planning process, Norwest identified construction opportunities related to our core skill sets as a strategic initiative. This initiative has evolved from the hiring of a few key individuals, to a relationship with the Heavy North team and the submission of several joint proposals, and most recently, the creation of Heavy Norwest.

Heavy North is a heavy civil construction company based in Fort McMurray, Alberta. Steve Bolen, the President, and Raj Sawh, the Vice President of Operations, founded Heavy North in 2012. In just a few years, the company has grown to approximately 25 employees with annual revenues exceeding $35 million while meeting the stringent safety requirements required in their market. Heavy North's team provides excellent safety performance, and has key experience in the areas of heavy civil construction, site grading, underground utilities, clearing and grubbing, transportation infrastructure, civil foundations, reclamation, and mining.

Life After Norwest...Bob Evans Retires

Bob Evans, President of Norwest’s U.S. Operations, is retiring effective March 31, 2016.

Bob joined Norwest in our Salt Lake City office in 1998 and worked as Vice President, Underground Mining prior to becoming President of Norwest’s U.S. operations and serving as Chairman of the Norwest Corporation Board of Directors. Bob’s history in the coal industry goes back earlier than his time with Norwest, beginning in 1969 when he was a Penn State mining co-op student with Republic Steel. After graduation, Bob became the resident engineer in their new mine, Kitt Energy located in Philippi, West Virginia. It was at this mine that the first 1000’
Intrepid Potash Inc. (IPI), with mines and mills throughout the western United States, wanted to improve the recovery of the potash mineral Langbeinite (Lang) at its East Plant Facility located northeast of Carlsbad, New Mexico, USA.

IPI engaged Norwest to detail engineer the design of the full scale fine Lang recovery system. The new system is housed in an independent tower structure. Due to the corrosive and abrasive nature of the ore being treated, liberal use of type-316 stainless steel, basalt lined piping, and HDPE materials were required. Significant attention was paid to automated drain valving in the processing piping to avoid solidification of pumped liquids/solutions during both planned and unplanned shutdowns.

Norwest provided balanced process flows, structural, civil, and mechanical detailed engineering along with electrical controls and detailed cost estimations. During the engineering period, Norwest and IPI project management conducted several face-to-face meetings with key stakeholders, namely local maintenance and operations personnel, to ensure successful operation of the new fine Lang circuit. Norwest used Navisworks-based 3D modeling for “fly-throughs” during these collaborative working sessions.

The mechanical, structural, and piping installations are nearly complete, and startup is scheduled for late March 2016.
Football Fever Strikes Colorado

For the latter part of the football season, Fridays at the Norwest Denver office were “wear your football team colors day”. Not all Denver/Trinidad employees are Denver Broncos fans, so the offices had a spirited rivalry between employees expressing differing allegiances including support for Broncos’ rivals in the playoffs (Pittsburgh Steelers and New England Patriots). Water cooler talk included analyzing each team’s chances on Fridays, and on Mondays analyzing the previous weekend’s games and scouting the next match-up.

All the hype and expectations were met with success when the Broncos defeated the Carolina Panthers 24 - 10 in Super Bowl 50 on February 7th. After waiting 17 years, the Denver Broncos, Peyton Manning, and their Norwest fans finally have another Super Bowl win!

Downtown Denver became a sea of orange with fans celebrating the Broncos’ victory, at a fitting celebration held February 9th. Helene Wieting, and other Norwest employees and their families attended the Super Bowl parade and rally along with an estimated one million other people.

The football match-ups created fun office rivalries, but despite football differences, teamwork on projects remained of utmost importance. Much like a winning football team, it takes team work and a variety of skillsets to succeed. Norwest has a team of highly skilled hydrologists, hydrogeologists, geotechnical engineers, mining engineers, civil engineers, and field specialists throughout the U.S. and Canada, who have the ability to work together to provide your company with high quality and cost effective consulting services to further your success.

Achieving Safe Drilling Operations - Believe It!

Health and Safety is a key value for all of us at Norwest. We believe in it and it forms the foundation of everything we do.

Norwest’s Field Operations team, based in Calgary, recently executed a multi-well potash exploration drilling program for a potash client in Saskatchewan, Canada, as the role of Prime Contractor. From November 2015 through mid-February 2016, more than 30 subcontractors worked closely with the Norwest Field Operations team to construct leases, drill 10,000+ vertical meters, and collect over 1,000 meters of high quality core. The Norwest team orchestrated the complex daily drilling operations with the belief in our ability to achieve Zero Harm.

Norwest’s team utilized the robust safety systems we have developed corporately, aligned with the client’s key safety requirements, as the foundation to create a strong and visible safety culture on the project site. The project leadership maintained a continual focus on safe operations, encouraging every individual to take ownership of and to proactively participate in the HSE program on a daily basis. Through hard work and dedication to achieving Zero Harm, the project team celebrated the field mobilization milestone recognizing a total of 42,268 field manhours with zero Lost Time Incidents (LTI). Norwest successfully completed the field program fulfilling the client’s need to enhance the subsurface knowledge of the project area while demonstrating their commitment to an injury-free workplace.
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They provide their services in Northern and Central Alberta and are actively planning for expansion into Southern Alberta, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia.

Heavy Norwest is a design-build entity that combines the engineering expertise of Norwest and the project management and construction capabilities of Heavy North. Heavy Norwest will provide design-build services in the resource and infrastructure industries and focus on earth works and related civil construction projects in Western Canada. The integrated solution to design-build affords the client reduced overheads, streamlined project reporting, improved communication and accountability, seamless knowledge transfer between stakeholders, minimized risk, and greater cost certainty.

Norwest and Heavy North will both continue to function and exist as separate entities offering specialized engineering and construction expertise to our clients. However, we believe that the combined expertise of both organizations will result in a streamlined project delivery model that can provide safe and effective solutions for our clients, particularly as many of our resource based industries are being challenged by low commodity pricing and changing regulatory regimes.

The initial points of contact for Heavy Norwest will be Steve Bolen, President, Keith Wilson, General Manager, and Tyler Knock, Construction Manager. Steve will be based in Heavy North’s current offices in Fort McMurray while Keith and Tyler will be based in Norwest’s offices in Calgary and Saskatoon.

During the coming weeks and months we will be launching a Heavy Norwest website. We look forward to visiting with you regarding our new capabilities and service offerings and to discuss how we can provide added value to your projects. We look forward to providing you with an update of our Heavy Norwest activities in the next issue of the Norwester scheduled for August 2016.

Norwest’s Community Involvement

Angela Welch, a Hydrologist with the Norwest Denver office, joined the Colorado Watershed Assembly (CWA) Board of Directors in December 2015. She began her involvement with watershed groups in 2002 when she provided surface water monitoring for Silver Lake Homeowners Association through the Big Thompson Watershed Forum located in Loveland, Colorado. In 2013, Angela helped form the Purgatoire Watershed Partnership located in Trinidad, Colorado, and sat on the Board as Secretary for two years.

The CWA’s mission is to provide support for collaborative efforts among diverse stakeholders to protect and improve the conservation values of land, water, and other natural resources of Colorado’s watersheds. To learn more about the CWA please visit www.coloradowater.org.

National Ground Water Association

Norwest is proud to announce that Rick Reinke, Manager, Water Resources in our Denver office, is co-author on a manuscript that has been accepted for publication in an upcoming issue of the National Groundwater Association’s Groundwater® journal. Groundwater® is a leading technical publication for groundwater hydrogeologists. Each issue of the journal contains peer-reviewed scientific articles on pertinent groundwater subjects.

The article is entitled, "Interpreting Variations in Groundwater Flows from Repeated Distributed Thermal Perturbation Tests", and is co-authored by Mark Hausner, Levi Kryder, John Klenke, Richard Reinke, and Scott Tyler. Visit the NGWA website http://www.ngwa.org/Pages/default.aspx for the article and upcoming events and conferences.

Join Us at MINExpo INTERNATIONAL® 2016

MINExpo INTERNATIONAL® 2016, sponsored by the National Mining Association, will be held September 26-28, 2016, at the Las Vegas Convention Center. This is the largest show of its kind in the world. It is about solutions that make it possible for the mining industry to meet challenges and capitalize on opportunities in a rapidly changing world in need of metals, minerals, and energy. Norwest Corporation professionals are ready to assist you with meeting these challenges in all aspects of mining. Please plan to visit Norwest in Booth 6929, between Caterpillar and Komatsu, for MINExpo INTERNATIONAL® 2016…the largest mining show on and under the earth!

Registration is now open! Sign up at minexpo.com or follow the show on Twitter (@MINExpo2016), and on Facebook (MINExpo INTERNATIONAL). We look forward to seeing you there.
The Future Looks Bright (Booming in Vancouver)

Given Norwest’s heavy involvement in the resource industry, we are often subject to market fluctuations that lead to tightening budgets and increasing client demands. Uncertainty and worry occupy our minds, while doom and gloom messages dominate the headlines. To counter the negativity, we sometimes need to look at the positives in life. As some markets decline, others are booming, and in Vancouver, the one industry that is definitely thriving is babies!

Many Norwesters in Vancouver have ignored the headlines over the last couple of years and have thrown caution to the wind to bring their offspring into this wild world. And more are on the way! After looking at these pictures, how could one not think that everything will be alright? Beware, you are about to experience a cuteness overload.

From left to right: Chloe Davis, Connor Steel, Amélie Kiassen, Alizée Velarde, Lucas Ngwenya, Brent Kimball, Eli Chen, Cliona Horn.

Life After Norwest...Bob Evans Retires

Longwall in the US was installed in January 1982. Since that time, Bob’s career has included such roles as General Manager and President for a number of underground coal operations. The breadth and variety of his coal industry experiences prepared him well for the leadership responsibilities he has so ably executed for Norwest Corporation. As part of Norwest’s efforts to improve corporate governance, Bob passed rigorous requirements to achieve the professional ICD.D designation by the Institute of Corporate Directors through the Universities of Toronto and Calgary.

Giving back comes naturally to Bob. Throughout his working life he has dedicated time to mining concerns by serving in roles with industry organizations including the National Mining Association, Utah Mining Association, and the Society for Mining, Metallurgy and Exploration. In retirement, Bob looks forward to spending more time with family and continuing with his community service projects. This is the second year that he along with his wife, Maureen, have organized the Kids Feeding Kids campaign to pack meals for starving children worldwide.

While we are happy that Bob will now be able to give himself to his family, hobbies, and projects outside the office, we are also sorry to lose the guidance of someone who has poured so much of himself into Norwest over the past 17 years. In addition to his leadership and guidance, Norwest will miss Bob’s ability to keep things fun outside the office, whether it was leading the Norwest team in 24-hour Ragnar running races (you get to know your co-workers after 24 hours in a van) or showing the rest of us how it’s done on the golf course. We wish Bob much health and happiness as he moves forward into the next chapter of what has already been a great story.

Norwest is on the Move

Effective February 1, 2016, our Charleston, West Virginia office moved to a new suite within the Kanawha Valley Building. We look forward to serving you from our new suite at:

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Charleston, WV 25301
charleston@norwestcorp.com
www.norwestcorp.com

You can continue to reach us at the same phone numbers:

Tel.: (304) 414-4500
Fax: (304) 414-4505
Soledad Mountain Mine – From Paper to Gold!

Golden Queen Mining (GQM) hit a major milestone, at their Soledad Mountain Mine, with the pouring of their first gold-silver doré bar in early March 2016. This doré bar was the result of years of design, permitting, and development work.

The Soledad Mountain Mine is an open pit heap leach operation located just west of Mojave, California, with a history of gold and silver production dating back to the late 1800’s. GQM acquired the property about 25 years ago and began renewed exploration work. The project development began to accelerate in the early 2000’s, and it was at this time that Norwest became involved. The GQM head office is located in Vancouver, and Norwest’s Vancouver mining team assisted the GQM’s project team, led by former President and CEO Lutz Klingmann, in preparing the original project feasibility study and subsequent updates as various components of the project were optimized. The project faced a number of hurdles in meeting California’s strict permitting requirements for open pit mine development, but in the end GQM was successful and received all their required permits in 2014, with construction beginning later that year. Development of the initial open pit areas began in the second quarter of 2015.

Two members of Norwest’s mine planning team, Gordon Chen and Satjeet Pandher, feel a real sense of ownership having been involved with the project from the initial feasibility mine plan, on-site mine engineering support, through to the initial doré pour, with continued ongoing site support. Their mine planning support includes generating the weekly plans, helping out pit supervisors implement the weekly plans, developing mid-range plans, and working with the geology team on ore control. Their interaction with on-site personnel ranging from the former President and CEO of the company, Bob Walish, right to the haul truck drivers in the pit has highlighted the work that Norwest is doing and also affords the opportunity to learn from our clients at all levels of the operation.

It is a rewarding experience to take a project from the pages of a feasibility study into production, and Norwest is pleased that GQM provided us an opportunity to take part in their success. We look forward to continuing to work with their team and in seeing many more doré bars poured over the coming years.