

# Mining Matters

## WOMEN IN MINING

In March 2010, Women in Mining (WIM) Canada released a report entitled *RAMP-UP: A Study on the Status of Women in Canada's Minerals and Metals Sector* (you can find the entire report at [http://0101.net/clime.net/1\\_5/04c/38a/14b/RAMP-UP%20Report.pdf](http://0101.net/clime.net/1_5/04c/38a/14b/RAMP-UP%20Report.pdf)).

“The purpose of the study was to establish a clearer picture on the current status of women in the minerals exploration and mining industry and the variances in perception that may exist between Academia, Employers and Employees focused on gender,” writes MaryAnn Mihychuk, President of Women in Mining Canada.

As a woman in mining myself, one of the more shocking statistics was that the representation of women in mining and exploration is the lowest among primary industry categories in Canada at just 14.4 per cent. This percentage remains well below the overall labour force average of 47.4 per cent and apparently the wage gap between men and women is well above the national average. While the highest representation of women in the industry may still be in service, supply and administration, here in the north we have a decent showing of female geologists, technicians, lab workers, prospectors, and company owners. One look at the photo gallery for the School of Exploration and Mining shows many a female face participating in field training. Local geologist Judi L'Orsa represented the north on a recent Women in Mining panel in Vancouver, speaking about her career in the industry. But let's do even better.

In its summary, *Ramp-Up* notes that a “lack of gender diversity in the mining and exploration sector threatens to undermine future prosperity of the sector. Moreover, research has demonstrated that gender diversity at all organizational levels can enhance performance. Therefore, increasing representation of women, and removing barriers to advancement, should be a high priority at the firm and industry levels.” Mentorship of and encouragement for young women entering this field will be a major part of increasing women's roles in the industry. Flexible work options and removal of old perceptions (such as extreme physical labour and unfriendly male-dominated work environments) not only encourage entry to this work force but keep educated, trained women in mining.



Anastasia Ledwon

This industry has a lot to offer women, from high wages and great benefits to excellent educational opportunities and exciting work environments. Come check it out!

*“Mining Matters” is a bi-monthly column written by Anastasia Ledwon, P.Geo., and welcomes your feedback and questions at [general@smithers.ca](mailto:general@smithers.ca).*

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