

Mining takes the stage at 'Futures'

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Twin Creeks Mine General Manager Melissa Harmon (center) as well as Turquoise Ridge General Manager Henri Gonin and Marigold Mine General Manager Greg Gibson talked about the increasing use of technology like drones to make mining safer and more efficient during Winnemucca Futures.

Editor's Note: The annual Winnemucca Futures economic development forum took place on Jan. 30, and featured Humboldt County's industry and government leaders. What follows is the last of a four-part series.

Winnemucca Futures 2019 highlighted the advancements and trajectory of Humboldt County's government, industries and education. More than 165 people from Humboldt County and other locales attended the event, held at the Boys and Girls Club.

Representatives of six gold mines in Humboldt and Pershing counties spoke in two panels. The first panel included Henri Gonin, General Manager of Barrick Turquoise Ridge Mine; Melissa Harmon, General Manager of Newmont Twin Creeks Mine; and Greg Gibson, General Manager of SSR Mining Marigold Mine. The second panel included Tracey Thom, Vice President of Investor Relations for Hycroft Mine; Jerod Eastman, General Manager of Pershing Gold Relief Canyon Mine; and Robert Stepper, General Manager of Coeur Rochester Mine.

Newmont Twin Creeks

Newmont Twin Creeks Mine General Manager Melissa Harmon offered an update about the mine's operations, including the new Twin Creeks Underground mine that opened last year.

Harmon said the underground mine supplements the operation's open pit. She said Twin Creeks



contributed 350,000 of the nearly 700,000 ounces of gold produced by Newmont's Nevada mines in 2018.

Twin Creeks mine has supported Winnemucca and Humboldt County economic development and community investment and support, Harmon said. Through the Legacy Fund and employee donations, Twin Creeks donated almost \$1 million in cash, scholarships and grants in Humboldt County in 2018.

Twin Creeks has been in operation for 32 years with 22 years under Newmont. Harmon said Twin Creeks is "aggressively pursuing resource growth" in order to extend mine life, and looks forward to celebrating 50 years of operation in Humboldt County within the next two decades.

In response to an audience question, Harmon said Twin Creeks uses different types of technology, including drones for aerial surveying and inspection, and in processing, technology provides real time information that allows technicians to see the chemistry of the ore and make changes.

Harmon emphasized the need for skilled workers like diesel mechanics, stressing the importance of a strong Career and Technical Education program, but the employee of the future will need some technological experience as well, in order to use the technology available.

Turquoise Ridge Mine

Barrick Turquoise Ridge (TR) Mine General Manager Henri Gonin gave a synopsis of the Turquoise Ridge Mine, located approximately 44 miles northeast of Winnemucca. Turquoise Ridge is a joint venture, with Barrick Mining Corp. as the 75 percent owner and Newmont holding 25 percent.

TR is reported to be continually expanding and growing, as it has for the past 33 years. Barrick officially announced a merger with Randgold Resources on Jan. 1. Gonin said that following the merger, Turquoise Ridge is still being recognized as one of Barrick's core mines, an achievement the mine reached in the past year.

"There is even more focus now from our new leadership within the company to aggressively grow Turquoise Ridge and that's important because within the industry we compete for capital and within our own company, as capital is not an endless resource," said Gonin.

In the way of technological advancements, TR has been using a remote operational chair in its Winnemucca town office to operate a loader underground at the mine site as a trial. Gonin said it's going well and they plan to continually explore methods of innovation.

Gonin reported the \$300 million third shaft project at TR to be progressing well and on schedule with the physical sinking planned to start mid-2019.

Turquoise Ridge employs roughly 500 full-time employees, with another 120 full-time contractors, along with an additional 100 on site for the shaft-sinking project.

Gonin also announced his immediate departure from Turquoise Ridge to fulfill the role of General Manager at the Cortez Mine in eastern Nevada near Elko.

Marigold Mine

Marigold is a gold mine located approximately 36 miles east of Winnemucca in Humboldt County, acquired by SSR Mining in 2014 from Goldcorp Inc. and Barrick Gold for \$275 million. As of 2019, Marigold Mine has been in production for 30 years and currently has a 10-year mine life.

Marigold General Manager Greg Gibson reported that in 2019, Marigold produced 205,000 ounces of gold from 77.6 million tons of ore and placed a record 27 million tons of ore on the leach pad. Marigold is constructing a new leach pad and adding four new trucks to the operational fleet to increase production.

"In the community, Marigold strives to be a good partner, we have over \$200,000 per year that we contribute through different donations and about \$60,000 annually that we put toward scholarships," said Gibson.

Looking at 2019 and beyond, Gibson said Marigold is looking toward growth, with a predicted increase in workforce, ounces produced and several large construction projects including leach pad cells (\$10 million each), continued mine exploration to add to the mine life, autonomous drilling implementation, continued technology innovation and an environmental impact statement (EIS) to be able to mine below the groundwater level.

Last year Marigold spent \$9 million in exploration on the west side of the mine property and this year they hope to convert that to mineable ore reserves. In 2019 they plan to spend \$7.5 million on exploration on the east side of the property.

Hycroft Mining Company

Hycroft Vice President of Investor Relations Tracey Thom shared some of the activity the mine has been quietly working on and deemed Futures as Hycroft's "coming out party."

Thom said Hycroft began a mill demonstration plant in 2015 that was successful, which demonstrated the success of the new Alkaline Atmospheric Oxidation (AAO) mill process (tank oxidation with sulfides) and built two five-thousand-ton demonstration leach test pads for a newly developed two-stage sulfide oxidation and leach process.

The two-stage sulfide oxidation process works as an alternative to mill ore processing, which eliminates the need for hundreds of millions of dollars of capital needed to build a new mill, and instead allows for new leach pads to be built which the mine already has the infrastructure in place for.

Hycroft has built seven demonstration pads for the new leach process with success and will move forward with a limited restart. Thom said the crusher and all other equipment is rehabbed and ready



for production and expected to be in operation within a month.

"We hope to give back to the community by creating more than 200 direct jobs at Hycroft and indirectly by focusing on working with contractors and consultants in the area," said Thom.

Hycroft is a good and silver mine located in the Sulfur Mining district, 54 miles west of Winnemucca.

"I have been with the company for 10 years so I've watched it come from nothing to blow all the way up to almost 400 people and sadly back down again, so I'm really happy to be able to say that we're working towards building back up," said Thom. "This time it's going to be a very measured growth cycle for us."

Pershing Gold Relief Canyon

Jerod Eastman, General Manager of Pershing Gold Relief Canyon Mine, gave an update on the reopening of the mine. "We keep getting closer and closer, but we're not quite ready to pull the trigger yet," he said, adding that the government shutdown had slowed down progress. He expected an announcement about the completion of the merger with Americas Silver this month, with construction to reopen Relief Canyon Mine to begin shortly after that. He said the mine will make every attempt to spend capital locally, and counties will see the tax benefits.

Eastman anticipates adding 200 jobs, looking in a 70-mile radius around Lovelock, including Winnemucca, Fernley, Fallon, Reno to pull employees. "I'd like to thank Greg and Melissa and Henri for training them for us," he joked, referring to the General Managers of Marigold, Twin Creeks and Turquoise Ridge mines.

Regarding transportation to the mines, Eastman said administrators are looking into carpooling opportunities like busing. He said his current employees have housing, but looking forward to expansion, it was important to keep housing in mind.

Coeur Rochester

Rob Stepper, General Manager Coeur Rochester, gave a quick update on the mine's status. He said the mine employed about 150 Winnemucca residents, and about 50 to 60 Winnemucca contractors as well.

Since operations began in 1986, Coeur Rochester mine has produced 150 million ounces of silver and 1.6 million ounces of gold. Stepper anticipates the current amendment of the plan of operations to take the mine life as far as 2035. The current 250 million construction project will require about 300 contractors at its peak to finish.

Stepper said the mine wouldn't be able to bus because of the range of counties where employees live. He also said Coeur Rochester was using contractors for some of the technological jobs. Though he hadn't spoken with his employees directly about housing needs, he said some of his employees were struggling to find adequate housing.