



NEWS NUGGETS

Compiled by Shane Lasley

Whistler project deal falls through

Alternative Earth Resources Inc. April 28 reported that it has decided to terminate its previously announced deal to acquire Kiska Metals Corp.'s Whistler copper-gold project in Southcentral Alaska. Under a non-binding agreement reported by Mining News on April 19, Alternative Earth was to acquire full ownership of Whistler in exchange for issuing Kiska 24.5 million of its shares, which would represent half of the company's shares upon completion of the exchange. Alternative Earth, which has been seeking the right project to jump into mineral exploration sector, said that it continues to assess various projects from mineral exploration to development stage. Kiska said the holding costs for Whistler has been reduced to a manageable level, allowing the company to maintain the asset as it continues to seek joint venture or other arrangements on this prospective advanced stage exploration project.

All Bokan rare earths split with MRT

Ucore Rare Metals Inc. April 28 reported the separation of samarium and gadolinium, the final two rare earths needed to be split by way of the cutting-edge molecular recognition technology. The MRT process is designed to bind selectively with ions based on multiple parameters such as size, chemistry, and geometry. Using a pregnant leach solution prepared from material taken from Ucore's Dotson Ridge deposit in Southeast Alaska, IBC Advanced Technologies developed a three-step process for creating nearly pure rare earths. In early March, Ucore reported the successful separation of all the individual rare earth elements except for samarium and gadolinium, which were bound together. Samarium and gadolinium have now been separated into individual salts, each with 99.2 percent purity. "We look forward to completing pilot-scale testing of this promising nano-technology," said Ucore President and CEO said Jim McKenzie.

Critical minerals bill in the House

Rep. Mark Amodei, R-Nevada, April 22 introduced the "National Strategic and Critical Minerals Production Act of

see NEWS NUGGETS page 12

PUBLIC POLICY

AMA calls out Jewell

Secretary cites 'much' mining on Alaska's federal lands; miners disagree

By SHANE LASLEY

Mining News

Alaska miners are taking U.S. Department of Interior Secretary Sally Jewell to task over recent comments she made that suggest mining is prolific on federal lands in Alaska.

Following a speech to the Center for American Progress, a liberal think-tank based in Washington, D.C., Jewell told Alaska Public Radio Network Correspondent Liz Ruskin that "much" of mining in Alaska is done on federal lands.

The Alaska Miners Association said this assertion contradicts what is actually happening in the Far North State and seized the "opportunity to clarify the actual amount of mining activity on federal lands and point out why there isn't more – massive areas currently closed to mineral entry and more proposed to be added, permitting delays, and other circumstances of bureaucracy."

In an April 22 letter to the Interior secretary, the mining group said that while nearly two-thirds of Alaska is owned by the federal government, a disproportionately small amount of mining activity takes place on these lands.

This is the latest exchange in an ongoing row between those advocating for resource development in Alaska and the department managing a large swath of the state's public lands.

While Jewell's comments on mining activity on federal lands have raised some questions about how much is 'much,' AMA does not see two of six large-

scale mines and roughly 18 percent of placer operations fitting the Secretary's description.

"For Secretary Jewell to say 'much' of Alaska's mining activity is on federal lands is an overstatement at best," according to AMA statewide board of directors President Jason Brune.

The mining association points out that the two large mines operating on federal lands in Alaska – Coeur Mining's Kensington operation and Hecla Mining's Greens Creek Mine, both in Southeast – are on U.S. Forest Service lands that do not even fall under the administration of the Interior Department.

Of these, Kensington was only developed after a lengthy legal battle between Coeur and another federal agency, the Environmental Protection Agency, which was only resolved when the U.S. Supreme Court decided in favor of the mine developer.

Much of the reason for the dearth of mines on federal lands in Alaska, however, is that many companies familiar with the landscape sidestep exploration on federally administered lands whenever possible.

Mineral companies, however, are reluctant to publicly express this discontent because of needing to deal with the Department of Interior and other federal agencies as a normal course of business – no matter whether it is state, federal or Alaska Native lands in which they are exploring or developing.

"Personally, we avoid working on federal lands," one such mining representative told Mining News.

This is particularly true at the exploration stage, according to a mining executive.

"Working on federal lands in Alaska is way more difficult than working on state lands, in terms of getting permits for exploration," he said.

While Millrock Resources Inc. CEO Greg Beischer said his company would not turn down the chance to evaluate a promising mineral prospect on federal lands, the prospect generator's extensive portfolio in Alaska does not include any federal claims.

Beischer said that, due to the perception that it is

see JEWELL COMMENTS page 12



ALAN BAILEY

SALLY JEWELL



DEANTHA CROCKETT

Want More Control of Your Blasting Results?



Ask Us About Differential Energy




Matt Budin

907-644-3966

matt.budin@dynonobel.com
www.dynonobel.com

DYNONobel