



# Flight Training Comes to Goose Bay

Photo: MFC Training

## NGC News

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Fifteen students are getting their first peek into the world of aviation this summer through a partnership between Air Borealis and MFC Training, operators of the Moncton Flight College. The seasonal flight school started operations on May 15 and will conclude on September 15.

Why bring flight training to Goose Bay? MFC's Vice President of Training, Blair Springate, addressed the essential nature of aviation in the North and the desire to expose students to training near where they live. "We know that it can be particularly difficult for Indigenous people to access flight training options close to home," he said. The hope he said, "is that...we can empower a new generation of Canadian pilots representative of

the markets Canadian air carriers serve."

### AIR BOREALIS INVOLVEMENT

Air Borealis is supporting the flight training school through its Goose Bay facilities, including providing hanger space for the fleet of Diamond DA-20 aircraft being used for training.

Air Borealis Director Travis Barbour says enrolment surpassed their expectations and he sees long-term potential for the airline to meet its future need for pilots. "We were looking for 10 people to enroll," he says. "And we reached 15. We wanted to bring this first stage of pilot training to Labrador to get local people interested in a career in aviation." ***continued next page...***

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*In the interest of preventing the spread of COVID-19, this newsletter is available online only.*

*This edition of **NGC News** may be read online at [ngc-ng.ca](http://ngc-ng.ca) and on NGC's Facebook page.*



*MFC Training uses a fleet of Diamond DA-20's for training. The aircraft is an Austrian-designed two-seater, with a cruising speed of around 256 km/h and a range of just over 1,000 kilometres. (Photos: MFC Training)*

## **Flight Training Comes to Goose Bay cont'd...**

The Goose Bay seasonal flight school offers students the option to obtain a Recreational Pilot Permit (successful candidates are permitted to carry one passenger in daytime only flying) or a Private Pilot License (successful candidates can fly with multiple passengers and earn other ratings, such as night, instrument, and multi-engine).

A Private Pilot License opens the door to commercial training, the starting point for pilots who want to pursue a career in commercial aviation with companies such as Air Borealis.

"We hope that by offering this training close to home, students from here will start down that road to becoming commercial pilots," says Travis Barbour. "And once they get a commercial license, that they will consider working for Air Borealis."

The Goose Bay operation combines flight training at the local airport with Tuesday and Thursday evening ground school sessions. Four students are attending ground school in-person in Goose Bay. The remainder are doing online virtual sessions with MFC instructors from Moncton.



### **FUTURE PLANS**

The success of this year's enrolment is encouraging. MFC is already planning to return to Goose Bay for another training program next year. That is good news for Travis Barbour.

"Bringing flight training to Labrador is an excellent way to introduce local people to the aviation industry," he says. "With one year under our belt, the word will get around that this is a great opportunity to learn to fly in our own backyard. Some of those people may end up flying for Air Borealis. That would be a success story." 🇳🇫



## **NCI Achieves Safety Standard for 2021**

**9th Consecutive Year for COR Status**

*Steve Downey, NCI's Environmental, Health, and Safety (EHS) coordinator and Office Manager Jennifer Saunders oversaw NCI's successful COR safety audit for 2021. NCI has earned COR status every year since 2013. (Tom Lyall photo)*

Nunatsiavut Construction Inc. has again obtained a Certificate of Recognition (COR) for its safety program, the ninth consecutive year that the company has achieved the coveted safety designation. The achievement isn't just the recognition that comes with COR status. Having status can mean reduced workers compensation premiums and it is an essential asset for even being permitted to bid on government and public agency tenders, such as those issued by Nalcor.

"Government agencies just won't look at companies that are not COR certified," says NCI Office Manager Jennifer Saunders, who was part of the company's audit program this year and who carried out the first NCI audit back in 2013. "COR is the safety standard for construction companies. You have to prove every year that you are doing what you claim to be doing as far as safety is concerned. That means keeping records of everything such as tool box talks at the start of each day, your policies, inspection reports."

### **AUDIT A KEY PART OF COR**

A fundamental element of COR is an annual audit of a company's safety policies and records. The audits work on a three-year cycle. In two of those three years, NCI carries out an internal audit, utilizing the same standards as the NLCSA. Documentation must be submitted to NLCSA for verification. In year three, an NLCSA auditor visits NCI and conducts its

own audit.

NCI was scheduled for an external audit in 2020, but with COVID-19 impacting every industry, it was decided by NLCSA that the company would do its own audit and email the documentation to St. John's. Steve Downey and Jennifer Saunders got to work in May and began compiling documents. But with COVID infections dropping in early fall, NLCSA decided to send an auditor to Labrador and carry out the audit itself. NCI received an "audit pending" letter in October and an audit pass in December.

"They identified some small issues and noted several areas where we made progress," says Steve Downey. "We had developed a physical distancing policy so that people could work safely on jobs. We now have to go further and develop safe work practices for different situations. For example, we have to come up with a plan if someone working for us on the coast comes down with COVID. We have to incorporate daily health screenings if we're working for a company such as Nalcor. This is all part of the continuous safety improvement that is a benefit of the audits that take place under COR."

Another COVID-related safety requirement is that NCI carry out fit-testing for the N95 respirators that workers are required to wear on some worksites.

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## NCI Achieves Safety Standard for 2021 *cont'd*



**NCI employees in Happy Valley-Goose Bay wear appropriate safety gear and display safe work practices. (Steve Downey photo)**

N95 masks, including respirators, were designed to fit snugly against the face and are considered to be very efficient in filtering airborne particles. "We will see stricter protocols with respect to the fitting of masks," says Downey. "For example, people have to be clean shaven for this type of mask to fit properly."

### CONTINUED FOCUS ON SAFETY

While COR status is an achievement, it's also a process that has to be repeated annually. Downey and Saunders will soon be at work getting documentation compiled for the 2021 audit which will help qualify NCI for COR status in 2022. "In August, we'll start the internal audit," says Downey. "It will take two or three months to complete and then we will send it to NLCSA for their review."



**NCI displays the COR logo, showing that it has attained status for 2021. It's the ninth consecutive year that the company has been awarded COR status for following safe work practices. (Steve Downey photo)**

### RESULTS ARE SEEN IN SAFE WORKPLACE

Effective safety procedures have to be repeated daily in the workplace. That's why specific practices

such as daily tool box talks are so important. "The crew picks a safety topic at the start of their shift and they talk about it for 10 to 15 minutes," says Downey. "It could be a talk about working on heights or a rescue plan. And that might turn into how weather conditions or Personal Protective Equipment figure into working safely that day."

Jennifer Saunders sees major positive changes in safety at NCI. "I have seen lots of progress," she says. "There were no tool box talks when I started. Now, we get them daily. Our staff are carrying out workplace and hazard assessments before they tackle a job. They are understanding that not only must this happen every day but that we also need to complete the paperwork to show that it's taken place."

Ultimately, attaining COR status reflects a commitment toward making NCI an even safer place to work. "The reason we have these processes in place is so that our staff is working safely every day," says Downey. "It's not about how much time it takes to do the paperwork. It's that the more you practice safe work habits, the better you get at it."

Jennifer Saunders developed NCI's first safety plan after attending a weeklong NLCSA training session in 2013. Until Steve Downey was hired as EHS coordinator two years ago, she did double duty - overseeing safety as well as the Office Manager duties. "The bottom line is that people are safe and they go home from work every day to their families and loved ones," she says. "Your life and your co-workers' lives are much more important than the 10 minutes that it takes to complete the paperwork." ❏

# North Coast Shipping Season Underway



George Eldridge photo

**From the minute the freight terminal opened at the Port of Goose Bay for the 2021 season on June 7, Nunatsiavut Marine's crew was in constant motion. Groceries, household staples, vehicles, boats, and construction equipment were taken in and then loaded onboard the *Kamutik W* for the journey to Rigolet and points north to Nain.**

Planning for 2021 started at the end of last season when LMI General Manager Gary Latimer, Operations Manager Dwayne Canning, and Port Manager George Eldridge assessed 2020 operations. Key among those considerations was the need to retain skilled and knowledgeable staff. "All of our crew are back with us this year," says Latimer. "It's a very consistent crew. Everyone came into this season knowing what they're supposed to be doing and they got right to it."

The schedule remains the same as last year, with Sunday afternoon departure for Rigolet and points north. There are seven scheduled departures for Cartwright and Black Tickle, beginning on June 25 and ending on November 12.

## PHONE RESERVATIONS SAME AS 2020

Nunatsiavut Marine handles all shoreside functions for the service, which is operated by Labrador Marine Inc., including passenger reservations. The telephone reservations system is in place again this year. An improvement this season is that passengers will be able to make a confirmed return reservation. This was not possible in 2020 due to COVID-19 travel restrictions which imposed a reservations limit by community. "This will be an improvement," says Latimer. "People can book this year knowing that they will have a seat going home."

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# North Coast Shipping Season Underway cont'd...

George Eldridge photo

People planning to book passage for travel to the north coast should be aware that because of continuing concerns about the spread of COVID-19, travel is restricted to north coast residents. Passenger capacity for each trip is limited to 84, with reservations being processed on a first come-first serve basis.

## FOOD WAS PRIORITY ON FIRST TRIP

The season-opening trip on June 13 was the first opportunity for north coast retail stores to replenish their supply of food and household staples since late fall.

"We prioritized food on the first boat," says Latimer. "Every community got most if not all of their food order. We probably left about half a load of other cargo behind, such as vehicles, construction equipment, and building supplies. That was scheduled for the second trip."



Nunatsiavut Construction's new stone crushing equipment is loaded on the Kamutik W for this season's second trip north. (George Eldridge photo)

## NEW INVESTMENTS IN 2021

Nunatsiavut Marine has made several capital investments in 2021 to improve efficiency and to make for safer working conditions. A new equipment repair building is being erected near the terminal. This will allow NMI's mechanic to repair equipment away from the elements. The company has also invested in an additional forklift to assist with freight movement inside the terminal.



Each morning at 8, NMI's crew meets for a safety briefing and daily update/task review. The meeting is led by the Freight Supervisor. It's an open forum where staff can raise their own issues or concerns. (Gary Latimer photo)

"We provide an essential service," says Latimer. "NMI is determined to do that efficiently and safely. It's about making sure that people and their goods get to their destination and that everyone goes home safely at the end of the day." 🙏

## Message from President and CEO Chris Webb

June has been a busy month in our group of companies. Nunatsiavut Marine loaded the first boat of the season to head north. Nunatsiavut Construction organized crews to get started on what looks like the busiest construction season in a few years. Air Borealis got its float plane operation ready for another season. Torngait Services Inc. was busy recruiting new employees as work ramps up to prepare for the Vale underground mine.

What a difference a year makes. At this time in 2020, our leaders were adjusting to the reality of dealing with COVID-19. And while we still must be vigilant and continue to follow public health measures such as mask wearing in public and frequent hand washing, we are so far ahead of where we were a year ago. Our province now has in excess of 75 percent of the eligible population with one dose of the vaccine and the numbers are even higher in the Labrador-Grenfell Health Region. Travel restrictions have been relaxed. In our workplaces, we have worked hard to adjust and have implemented measures to work safely.

We are winning this hard-fought battle against COVID, but we must be mindful that we can only continue to win if we strictly follow public health guidelines.

I am immensely proud of the effort our companies have shown in the past year. While COVID impacted our operations, our leaders and employees worked hard. Their hard work and the trust of our clients and customers enabled the Nunatsiavut Group of Companies to improve our performance in 2020. That is excellent news for our organization and for Nunatsiavut Beneficiaries.

We are supported in our work by the Labrador Inuit Capital Strategy Trust. Their advice and guidance is essential to our success. I want to thank them for the role that they played in 2020 and their continued good counsel in 2021 as we plan for the years ahead.

A key element in being successful is to make investments so that our companies become more



efficient and productive. The Trust approved major capital investments for Nunatsiavut Construction and Nunatsiavut Marine for 2021. These investments will be of great importance to both companies as we move forward.

One of the sacrifices that we made in 2020 as COVID took hold was to discontinue our community trips after visiting just two communities. These visits are extremely important to NGC. They give us the chance to tell you about our companies and their activities, but equally important, the meetings give Beneficiaries the opportunity to ask us about our work. We value those meetings and we will resume them in 2021, providing it is safe to do so from a public health perspective.

The community visits also give us the opportunity to visit high school students and tell them about the opportunities that exist within their companies. We want young Beneficiaries to know that careers can be made with NGC, right here at home. Our companies actively encourage Beneficiaries to continue their education through the sponsorship of scholarships worth \$18,500 annually.

As we head into summer, enjoy the long days and evenings, and take the opportunity to spend time with family and loved ones. Continue to be safe and follow public health guidance. And thank you to all our employees and leaders for improving our performance while working under challenging circumstances. We really couldn't have done it without you.

*Chris*



# Kayla Torarak earns her Captain's Stripes

*Captain Kayla Torarak at the controls of Air Borealis Twin Otter on her first flight as captain into Voisey's Bay.*

It was a flight of firsts on Sunday, May 30, when Air Borealis' Twin Otter left Goose Bay with a load of cargo for the Vale airstrip at Voisey's Bay. In control of the aircraft was Captain Kayla Torarak of Hopedale and First Officer Brianna Ricketts of Gander, Air Borealis' first-ever all-female crew.

There was another first that day. It was Captain Torarak's first flight in charge of the aircraft after earning her Captain's stripes. "It was exciting to be finally released as captain and I was a bit nervous, Kayla says. "But my first day was great and it was great having Brianna with me."

Kayla, a Nunatsiavut Beneficiary from Hopedale, started flight training in 2009. After earning her commercial pilot's licence, she was certified as a flight dispatcher and hired by Air Labrador, the predecessor to Air Borealis. As flight dispatcher, she got to know the airline, the routes that pilots flew, and the weather conditions up and down the coast. A year later, she was promoted to first officer.

## AIR BOREALIS LAUDS ACHIEVEMENT

Air Borealis Director Travis Barbour calls Kayla's achievement a "success story. That was a huge day for us to have her make Captain and to do her first flight," he says. "It is very rewarding for our airline which is one-third owned by the people of Nunatsiavut, to develop and train an Indigenous female from Hopedale to be a captain. It shows the communities that own the airline that the planes are being flown by local people."

Kayla is modest about her personal achievement but expressed the hope that it will be a motivation for other women to consider aviation as a career. "For me, this is a big step and I hope it inspires more women to get into flying and to consider a career with Air Borealis," she says. "I didn't set out to be a role model for women and Indigenous people but I hope people realize that they can do anything if they put their mind to it and keep at it."

[More photos on next page...](#)



# ***First all-female flight crew***



*Brianna Ricketts, left, and Kayla Torarak, made history on May 30 as the first all-female Air Borealis flight crew. It was also Kayla's first flight in command of the Twin Otter after earning her Captain's stripes. (Photos courtesy of Air Borealis)*

# Busy Season Ahead For NCI



*NCI General Manager Tom Lyall and his team have had a busy winter preparing tenders and bidding on work. Pending arrival of equipment and materials, NCI expects to begin its north coast projects in July. (Jennifer Saunders photo)*

2021 will be a busy year for Nunatsiavut Construction Inc. (NCI). It won several tenders, both inside and outside Nunatsiavut, for construction and renovation projects. Having obtained certification for its roofing operation, work in that area is growing as well. The company will benefit from new capital investment to upgrade its rock crushing business. **NGC News** talked with NCI's general manager Tom Lyall to get his take on how 2021 is shaping up.

**NGC News:** How different is this year compared with 2020, when you were preoccupied with how to work under COVID restrictions?

**Tom Lyall:** The COVID work requirements have actually strengthened how we conduct our business. The extra effort needed to maintain physical distancing and sanitary requirements has made us rethink our day-to-day activities in a way where we have improved production and quality with fewer resources. 2021 will see us continue to adhere to the COVID protocols in place in the regions that we operate and provide the same level of quality and performance.

**You have a lot of work on the books for 2021. Let's start with the north coast.**

Our 2021 construction season has the potential to be our best season yet with a significant volume of work secured, and several other potential opportunities arising in the coming weeks. In Nunatsiavut, we have signed three new private

home builds, a new warehouse for NG, several private roof rejuvenation projects, and the NG Home Repair Program for twenty homes.

**NCI has made a major new investment in its rock crushing operation. Take us through that and the difference that new equipment will make in 2021.**

Our quarry activities are integral to our operation. NCI's existing crushing equipment is 12 years old and requires extensive maintenance. It is inefficient for our existing operation. Our choice was to carry out an extensive and expensive overhaul to the existing fleet or replace the units with more efficient and eco-friendly equipment, with an increased throughput capacity of 200%. The addition and commissioning of these new assets will allow us to better service the needs of Nunatsiavut by dramatically reducing the amount of time to produce material. What we could produce in 60 days historically, we can now produce in 30 days.

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# NCI Prepares for Busy 2021 cont'd



*NCI's rock crushing equipment in Goose Bay, awaiting shipment to Nain. The new equipment will increase production and improve efficiency. (Tom Lyall photo)*

**NCI has made it clear that it's committed to being a major force in Nunatsiavut. But you've also said it's necessary to get work outside the region. Explain that strategy.**

NCI is and will always be committed to the infrastructure improvements in Nunatsiavut. Our mandate is to provide wealth in trust for Nunatsiavut Beneficiaries. To do that, we need to be a self-sufficient and profitable entity. Historically, we were a seasonal operation directly in support of Nunatsiavut activities with little to no work activity from December to early summer. If we are to be truly successful, we must be a year-round operation. That's why we have expanded our region of delivery to other areas of the province. We've also expanded our capacity and capabilities so we can better service the needs of Nunatsiavut.



*A trailer load of roof trusses for the NG warehouse in Hopedale. (Tom Lyall photo)*

**What work have you won outside Nunatsiavut so far this year?**

We secured contracts on the 9 Wing Gander Warehouse, roof replacements on two Nalcor generating plants in Labrador, NLHC external repairs, and a host of private projects including roofing, maintenance repairs, window replacements, office fit ups, and foundations.

**NCI has developed expertise in carrying out roofing work. How is that part of the business going?**

Exceptionally well, with the completion of three roofs so far and four more signed. We are more focused on specialty roofing such as metal, modified bitumen (asphalt-based) low slope/flat roofs, and an emphasis on improving the overall roof performance.

**Can you find the workers that you need for 2021?**

We have conducted candidate pool advertisements for our various trades and hired a few qualified journeyman tradespeople as crew leads in support of our work. The addition of a few new hires, coupled with our existing crews, will allow us to effectively complete the required works.

**You're trying something new this year with young Beneficiaries. Tell us about that.**

NCI is constantly looking at ways to introduce young Beneficiaries to the construction industry. We will have two Beneficiary students in Upper Lake Melville and one Beneficiary in Nain join our ranks for the season. It is our hope that by direct exposure to the industry, they might be inclined to pursue a career in construction trades.

**How close are you to being a year-round operation?**

We are there now. We were successful in securing and completing works during the 2020-21 off-season. NCI will continue to build on those successes and expand our region of delivery, our capabilities, and our capacity. 🏠

# Scenes of NCI's 2021 construction season

Photos by Tom Lyall



*A roofing job underway in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. NCI's roofing business is growing, with several jobs complete and more contracts signed.*



*NCI is adept at sourcing building materials in advance, an especially important strategy given the shortage of some materials since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic more than a year ago. In the photo at left, 1500 bundles of roofing are stockpiled, enough for 12 houses.*



*A tractor pulls an excavator to the freight terminal in the Port of Goose Bay to begin excavation for a maintenance shed for Nunatsiavut Marine Inc. NCI will also erect the shed, which will provide shelter for NMI mechanics working on the company's equipment.*

# **INSIDE THE VALE PROJECT**

## **TSI'S AIRSTRIP OPERATIONS CREW**



*The TSI ground crew services a DC-3 at the Voisey's Bay airstrip. Cargo flights like this one are common. But the ground crews mainly service Dash-8 and Twin Otter aircraft that carry employees, food, and other supplies to site. (TSI photo)*

With about 250 crew on site, divided into two, two-week shifts, Torngait Services Inc. employees make sure the nickel, copper, and cobalt mine functions like clockwork. TSI delivers a range of services similar to what you would expect in a medium-sized town. They manage the water and sewer system and maintain roads year-round. And there are the extras on a mining site - hauling ore and then loading it into the the *Umiak I* for shipment out of Labrador for processing.

Starting with the March issue, **NGC News** began profiling the work that the various TSI divisions carry out as part of the company's contract with Vale. In this edition, our focus is the aircraft operations group.

### **UNDERGROUND MINE SPURS EXPANSION**

Vale's decision in June 2018 to proceed with the underground mine expansion has substantially increased the number of people on site. As the site services provider, TSI has kept up with the

additional demand for service by hiring additional staff. Employee numbers have more than tripled, from 71 staff in September 2018 to in excess of 250 staff in June of 2021.

The airstrip operations crew has increased from 4 to 8 on each two-week shift to handle the extra activity at the site. Their work involves loading and unloading baggage and freight and transporting employees to and from aircraft. Prior to expansion, TSI required one cargo van and a stake truck to handle baggage and freight. Since then, four cube vans have been added to the fleet.

TSI has 14 certified ground handlers at the Vale site, all of whom have been trained through the Provincial Aerospace (PAL) online training program.

The graphic on page 15 displays in more detail, the additional traffic going through the Voisey's Bay airstrip since the underground mine expansion got underway.



## **Flight Operations Crew CVB2 Voisey's Bay**

*Air Traffic has increased significantly into CVB2, the Transport Canada Location Identifier for the airstrip at Voisey's Bay. At times, there have been several aircraft on the ground simultaneously. This prompted Vale to expand the apron, providing aircraft more space to park.*



*With increased passenger traffic to Voisey's Bay, TSI added an additional bus and driver to convey workers to and from the airstrip. Since mine underground expansion got underway, the buses are running an average 8 hours a day, compared to 4 hours in the pre-expansion period.*

*TSI's crew unloads a Dash-8 400 (right), the largest in the Dash-8 line of aircraft. The height of the entrance to the aircraft cargo area posed problems accessing cargo and luggage. TSI employees came up with a solution: they built a platform (below) to compensate for the height difference with smaller aircraft.*



*Photos: TSI staff*



The increase in activity at the Vale site is reflected in the number of flights, passengers, and amount of cargo and luggage handled by the TSI Ground Operations Crew. This graphic compares traffic at the airstrip before work on the underground got underway with the situation today.

## Before mine expansion

## Since mine expansion

### DASH-8 FLIGHTS

daily, Monday to Friday.

1



### DASH-8 FLIGHTS

daily, Monday to Friday.

3

### TWIN OTTER FLIGHTS

days a week: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Occasionally, a weekend flight.

3



### TWIN OTTER FLIGHTS

days a week: 2 each on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. 1 each on Tuesday and Thursday. Usually 3 freight flights on Saturday and Sunday to catch up on cargo.

5 + 3

### PASSENGERS

travelling in and out each week.

170



### PASSENGERS

travelling in and out each week.

560

### BAGGAGE WEIGHT

weekly. Top number is pounds in, bottom number is pounds out.

4000  
3000



### BAGGAGE WEIGHT

14,000  
11,000

### FREIGHT

weekly. Top number is pounds in, bottom number is pounds out.

17,000  
1000



### FREIGHT

50,000  
4,000

### CREW SIZE

3 ground crew and 1 bus driver working 4 hours a day.

4



### CREW SIZE

6 ground crew and 2 bus drivers working 8 hours a day.

8

# Beneficiaries Part of Mine Rescue Team

Employees at the Vale underground mine take part in a rescue exercise in the Eastern Deeps. (Jessica Flowers photo)

Allison Winters and Jessica Flowers joined the Mine Rescue Team at the Vale mine at different times, but the two Beneficiaries who are related and are both from Hopedale, found inspiration in the same way – through curiosity.

“There weren’t many women on the team at the time when I joined three years ago,” says Allison. “I wanted to help and empower more women to join the team with me. I was also curious to see what it was all about.”

Jessica Flowers’ regular job at the mine is maintenance planner with Innu-Inuit Redpath, where she helps handle inventory and incoming freight, including parts to repair some of the big machines operating at the site. Allison Winters is employed with Vale and has been working underground for three years. While her main job is hauling rock waste to the surface, she also does a multitude of other jobs, including operating a backhoe, scoop, boom truck, scissor lift, telehandler, and the 950 loader.

Jessica Flowers' motivation to become part of the team came from a colleague. “Someone else in the office was involved and I was curious,” she says. “I filled out an application last October and got accepted. It just so happened that the four-day introductory course was taking place the next week and I would still be onsite.”

The introductory course gives a broad overview of what’s involved in mine rescue, from studying about chemicals to practicing rescues. “You put the BG 4 breathing apparatus (30-pound weight) on your back and full facemask and go underground,” says Flowers. “We walked with a stretcher to experience how heavy it is to carry someone up and down the ramp.”

She credits her co-workers for helping get her regular duties completed while she did the introductory training. “I would wake up early and go to the office and plan ahead. During breaks in the course, I’d run to the office and do some more work. After the day, I would stay back in the office to make sure my work was done. Everyone in the office was awesome in picking up the slack.”

## MINE RESCUE HAS LONG HISTORY

The first mine rescue teams were formed in British Columbia more than a century ago after a series of gas outbursts in a coal mine. British Columbia, and then other provinces, created standards for mine rescue programs. The province of Newfoundland and Labrador developed a Mine Rescue Training Standard that gets its legal clout from the *Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Act* as well as the *Newfoundland and Labrador Occupational Health and Safety Regulations*.

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## Beneficiaries Part of Mine Rescue Team cont'd...

Allison Winters and Sam Alder use hydraulic tools (spreader and Jaws of Life) during an exercise. The tools are used to pry open and cut metal in order to free people trapped in vehicles. (Allison Winters photo)

Employers with underground workplaces are required by law to put plans in place to ensure worker safety and to respond to emergencies such as rescuing trapped workers, locating and putting out fires, and examining the workplace for harmful gases.

### MINE RESCUE TRAINING AT VALE

The introductory course at Voisey's Bay is just the start of training for members of the mine rescue team. Six times a year, the team takes part in refresher training. Allison Winters will do a refresher on her next turnaround. Jessica Flowers did her most recent training in early June. "We did rope rescue, practiced tying knots, and went over a ledge," says Jessica. "It's kind of like rock climbing."



Allison Winters in her breathing apparatus and Jessica Flowers operating equipment for Innu-Inuit Redpath. (Allison Winters/Jessica Flowers photos)



Jessica Flowers and her team during a rescue exercise. (Jessica Flowers photo)

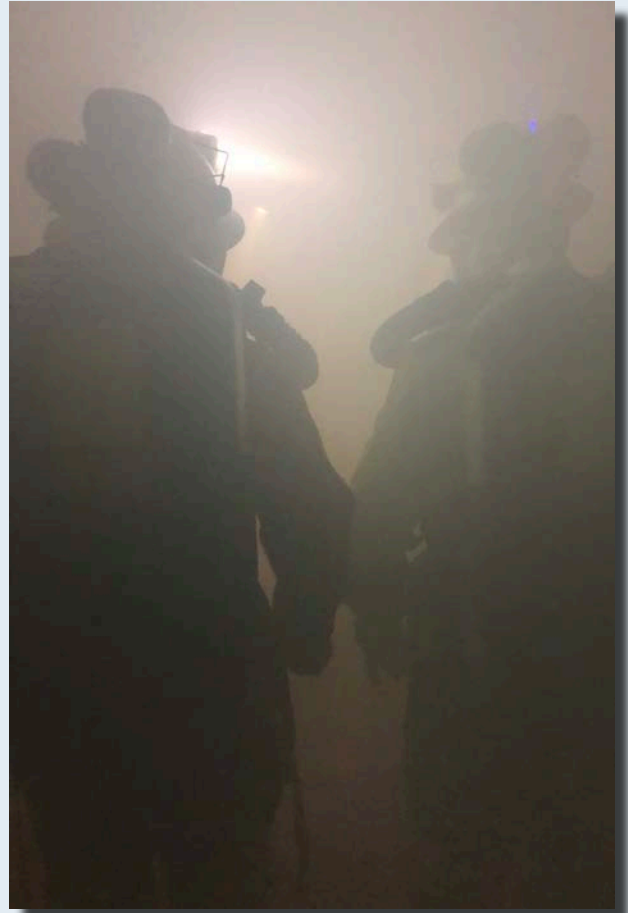
The teams are made up of five people, and teamwork is key as they practice for events that they hope will never happen. "We practice first aid, firefighting, air bags for heavy lifting, the jaws of life to cut a vehicle in half if needed," says Allison.

"The number one person is the captain, second is the gas checker, the third is first aid, the fourth has the oxygen device, and fifth is the vice-captain and gives the captain a hand with their duties. We take turns being in each role every training session."

The teams form close bonds. "Everyone has your back," says Allison. "They all feel like family. It's great to be able to meet new people from all over. I feel very proud to be a part of the underground mine rescue team of Voisey's Bay. It's fun to show up some of the guys with my skills. Girl power!"

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## Beneficiaries Part of Mine Rescue Team cont'd...



*The training is intended to test and train rescue teams under conditions that are present in actual emergencies, including carrying a person on a stretcher up and down ramps inside the mine and operating in near zero visibility. (Allison Winters/Jessica Flowers photos)*

When she started with the team, Jessica had to confront a major challenge for someone working in an underground mine, her claustrophobia. "I had to get over that," she says. "We did an exercise with smoke and I couldn't see the person next to me. Since doing a few refreshers and being underground with oxygen and in full face mask, I've gotten used to it. We did one exercise where they used a fan to circulate smoke from a simulator. Then they turned off the lights, making it next to impossible to see anything. We had to practice looking for someone tapped underground in those conditions."

Having the courage to overcome those fears has opened new opportunities for Jessica. "I like to get past my fears," she says. "I was afraid of water and now I'm looking into getting certified to scuba dive. I enjoy rock and ice climbing. I'm very adventurous

in my personal life and with Mine Rescue, I get to pursue that part of me at work and I get paid to do it. The instructors are awesome and all the crews are great. We learn, do cool things, and have a great laugh the whole time."

### **ENCOURAGE MORE WOMEN TO JOIN**

Both Jessica and Allison would like to see more women join the rescue team. "It's an important role. I would encourage others to join up," says Allison. "They give you T-shirts, sweaters, hats, bags, all with the team logo. I love it. They also pay you for being on the team. Overall being on the team is a lot of fun, and it's also very rewarding."

"I love it," says Jessica. "It makes me feel a part of the mine. I like going underground. I'm still meeting new people every time I go. I recommend it to other people." 🛠️

# NGC staff assist with Town Clean-Up



NGC office staff took part in the annual Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay clean-up on June 2. Pictured left to right, Eileen Saunders, Lisa French, and Sevilla Hope. The Town started its Annual Spring Cleanup with municipal workers on May 31. The NGC group picked up trash in the area around the NGC offices on Royal Street. (Lisa French photo)

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