

Benefits from Northern Mining

2021 Summary

May 2024

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Mining in Northern Saskatchewan

The northern half of Saskatchewan is known for its lakes, rivers, forests, resources, and tourism. Northern Saskatchewan is home to about 40,000 people who are mostly of Cree, Dene and Métis heritage.

Mining offers job opportunities for many residents of small communities in the north. Uranium operations include Cigar Lake mine, milling at McClean Lake, Key Lake mill, McArthur mine and Rabbit Lake mine/mill, and Seabee gold mine/mill. While McClean Lake, Key Lake, McArthur River and Rabbit Lake were in care and maintenance for all or a portion of this time, approximately 2,200 people were employed. These constitute a total of 12 properties.



Photo credit: Aurora Communications, Key Lake tour 2021, Northern Saskatchewan Environmental Quality Committee. This committee of northern community representatives shares information on development of uranium and other resources.

Agreements in Effect

The owners of these 12 properties entered into two agreements with the province for each site before operations began. The agreements are the Mineral Surface Lease Agreement and the Human Resource Development Agreement.

The Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Government Relations each administer sections of the Mineral Surface Lease Agreements (MSLA). The main purpose of these agreements is long-term rental of Crown land for mining and milling in northern Saskatchewan. They also contain specific commitments for environmental protections for the life of the project, Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) protocols, yearly reporting requirements, and socio-economic benefits for residents of Saskatchewan's north.

Saskatchewan uses the Mineral Surface Lease Agreement to help residents of Saskatchewan's north benefit from mining operations in their region. The lessee is required to use its best efforts to establish employment, contracting and local purchasing policies and practices, and development programs which maximize project-related employment and economic opportunities for residents of Saskatchewan's north.

Each lease also requires the mining operator to have a Human Resource Development Agreement (HRDA), administered by the Ministry of Immigration and Career Training. These agreements focus on opportunities for training, employment, and job advancement for northern residents.

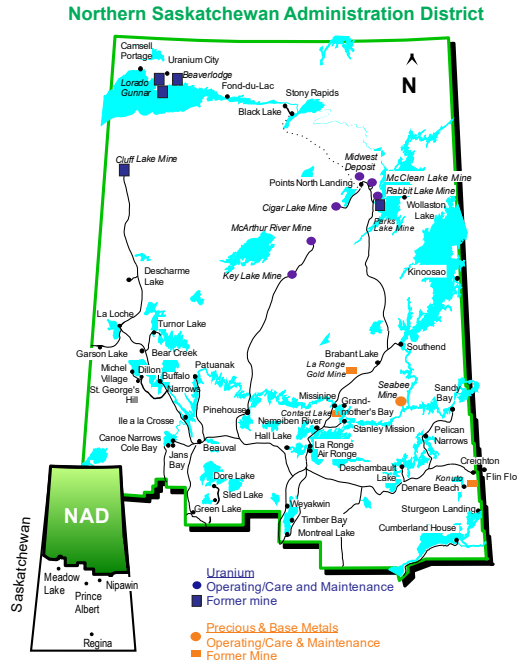
There are five other leases that no longer have operations or employees: Beaverlodge, Cluff Lake, Konuto, La Ronge Gold Project, and Parks Lake are in various stages of decommissioning. A sixth lease, Midwest Project, is not yet developed.

Commitment to Northern Saskatchewan

Within the MSLA, the province of Saskatchewan and the mining companies operating in the province's north have each made commitments to Northern Saskatchewan. The province of Saskatchewan has committed to using its best efforts to provide basic education and literacy to maintain an educated workforce.

The mining companies have committed to using their best efforts in hiring residents of Saskatchewan's north (RSN), maximizing training, procuring products and services from businesses with employees located in Northern Saskatchewan, and providing compensation to the previous leaseholders of the mining operations.

Uranium mining companies make four additional commitments for employee services, education promotion, community vitality monitoring, and public involvement.



Twelve Mineral Surface Lease Agreements are in effect for mine/mill operations in the Northern Saskatchewan Administration District.

Employment Commitment

All mining operations commit to work with the province, other mining operators, and other agencies to use their best efforts to maximize northern employment. Uranium companies make an additional commitment to work towards a long-term goal of 67 per cent northern participation in the labour force at northern sites.

Here are some of the ways that the northern mining companies stay committed to Northern Saskatchewan:

- Priority recruitment communities and northern Saskatchewan communities are included in advertising for positions.
- Entry-level or trainee positions filled by RSN candidates.
- RSN candidates are given hiring preference, regardless of the position classification.
- Hiring contractors that employed RSN and Indigenous people.
- Provided air transportation for workers to mine sites from 10 northern communities plus Prince Albert and Saskatoon.
- Maintained union agreements that give preference to northern and Indigenous workers.
- Maintained satellite offices in: Fond du Lac, Black Lake, and English River First Nations, and in Pinehouse.
- Recruitment activities adapted to ongoing operational changes and the uncertainties of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Mandatory vaccination requirement was implemented late in 2021, resulting in low turnover.

Definition of a “Resident of Saskatchewan’s North”

For recruitment purposes, a “resident of Saskatchewan’s north” is defined as:

- A person who has resided in Saskatchewan’s north for a period of 10 years or one-half their age, whichever is less. A person retains “northern status” if they:
 - relocate outside of Saskatchewan’s north for education;
 - reside outside of Saskatchewan’s north for less than five years; or
 - moved back to the north.

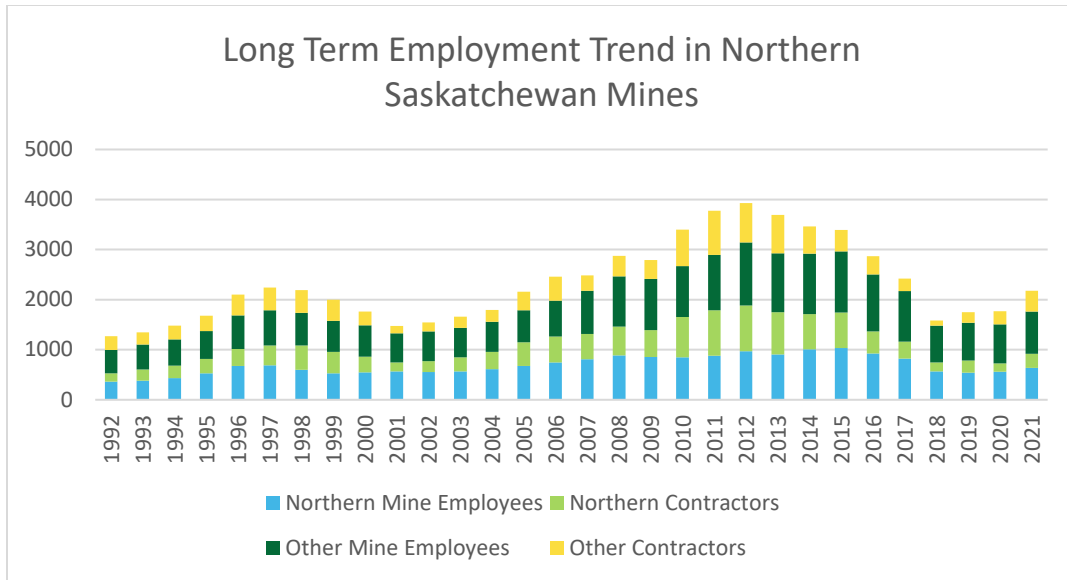
Or:

- A northerner who is transferred to another northern mine or re-employed by a mine within the year and met the above criteria at the time of recruitment.

Employment Statistics

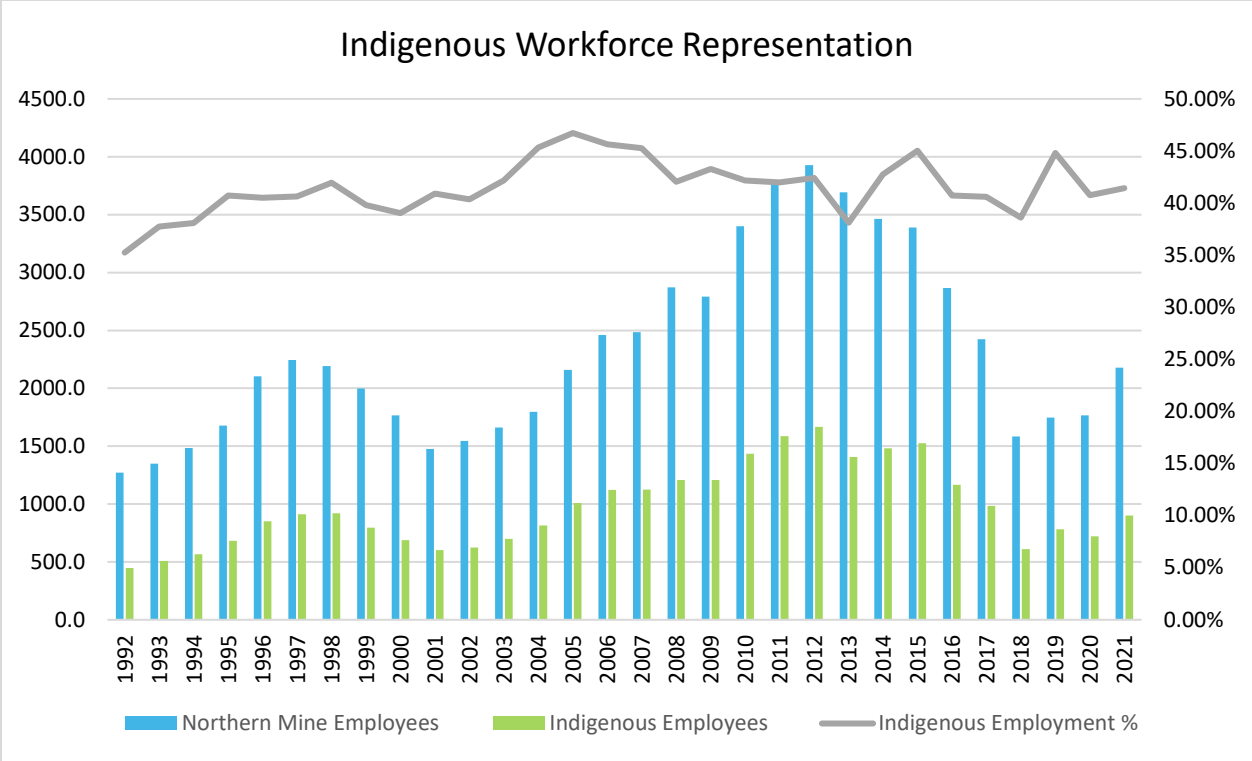
The year 2012 marked the peak of work activity in Northern Saskatchewan mines and mills. Throughout the years the number of people employed in mining in Northern Saskatchewan has varied. Mine sites in care and maintenance and operating account for approximately 2,200 employees in 2021 (this includes both contracted workers and direct employees of mine site operators).

The industry workforce has seen an increase in employment due to a stronger uranium market, lifting of COVID-19 restrictions, and mine sites resuming production after being in care and maintenance.



Listed below are statistics from the mine and mill sites in the Northern Saskatchewan Administrative District (NSAD) in 2021:

- There were 2,177 people employed (including contracted employees) at the mine and mill sites at the end of 2021. This is an increase of 410 positions from 2020.
- Residents of Saskatchewan’s north accounted for 42.2 per cent of all employment in the mine sites in Northern Saskatchewan. This is an increase of approximately 1.2 per cent from 2020.
- Indigenous people accounted for 41.4 per cent of the workers in mining operations in Northern Saskatchewan. This is an increase of approximately 0.7 per cent from 2020.
- Females accounted for 15.3 per cent of the workers at the mine and mill sites in Northern Saskatchewan in 2021. This is an increase of 0.1 per cent from 2020.



Job Forecast for 2022

- Recruitment activities are anticipated to increase and will continue to adapt to ongoing operational changes.
- Anticipate reopening of mines and mills that have been in care and maintenance.
- Recruitment efforts will be linked to internal mobility, organizational changes and seasonal projects.

Employee Education and Training Commitment

All mining operations commit to use their best efforts to maximize training and job advancement opportunities for northerners. This helps to ensure that the mining and milling sites will continue to recruit and promote RSNs.

Training Opportunities

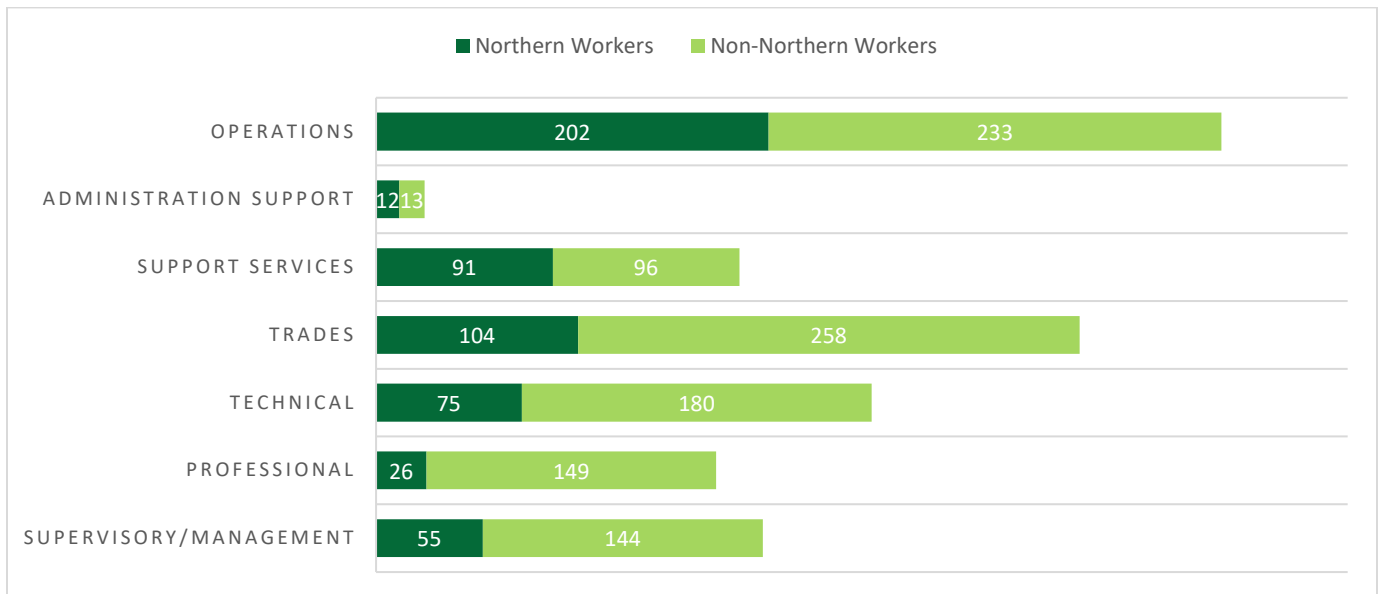
- Mine sites offered various training opportunities. Some of these programs were held in conjunction with other organizations such as Saskatchewan’s Apprenticeship Program.
- Offerings in 2021 included: Environmental Trainee Program, Power Engineer Trainee Program, Fireman’s Certificate and Class 3 and Class 4 Power Engineer certifications.
- One Power Engineer Trainee attained Class 3 Power Engineer certification.
- Six common training activities were also completed: Fall Protection, Confined Space, Control of Hazardous Energy Refresher, Electrical Safety – Nonelectrical Worker, Basic Radiation, and Job Hazard Analysis.

- Provide ongoing and progressive on-the-job training.
- Establish internal training programs necessary to meet its needs.
- Organize and implement training programs so that employees are able to use skills acquired and time spent as credit towards certification or status recognized by Saskatchewan training institutions and other accreditation-granting bodies.

Training Forecast for 2022:

- Individual Coaching/Mentoring
- Leadership Development
- Trades Helper Program
- Environmental Trainee Program
- Power Engineer Trainee Program

What types of jobs are at mining operations and how many people work in them? As of December 31, 2021:



Northern Business Commitment

All northern mining operations commit to use their best efforts to encourage northern businesses and joint ventures to supply goods and services.

Uranium operations make an additional commitment to use their best efforts to achieve a goal of northern businesses annually supplying 35 per cent of the total goods and services to support their operations in Northern Saskatchewan.

In 2021, the amount of goods and services procured by mining operations in Northern Saskatchewan was approximately \$400 million. Of that, \$151.4 million or 37.9 per cent was procured from businesses with employees residing in Northern Saskatchewan. This is a notable increase from 2020 and exceeded the target of 35 per cent.

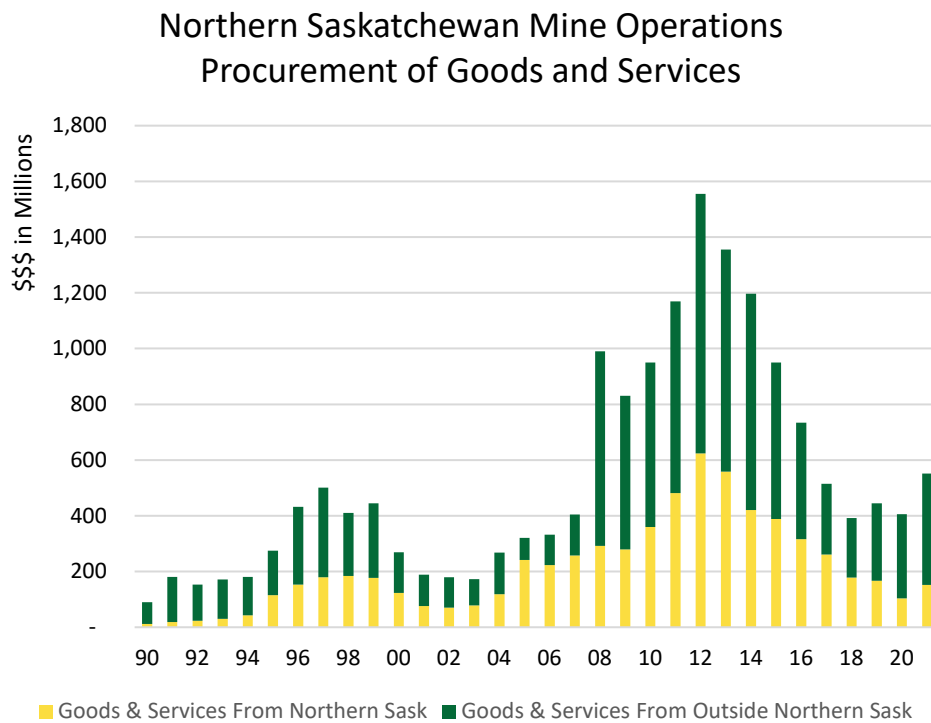
Forecasts for 2022 expect similar results due to some sites continuing in care and maintenance.

Northern Saskatchewan Administrative District Procurement Statistics

The number of northern suppliers has fluctuated over the years due to a slump in uranium prices, a corresponding downturn in production and COVID-19. Contractors and consultants make up the bulk of the northern Saskatchewan procurement, accounting for approximately \$75 million.

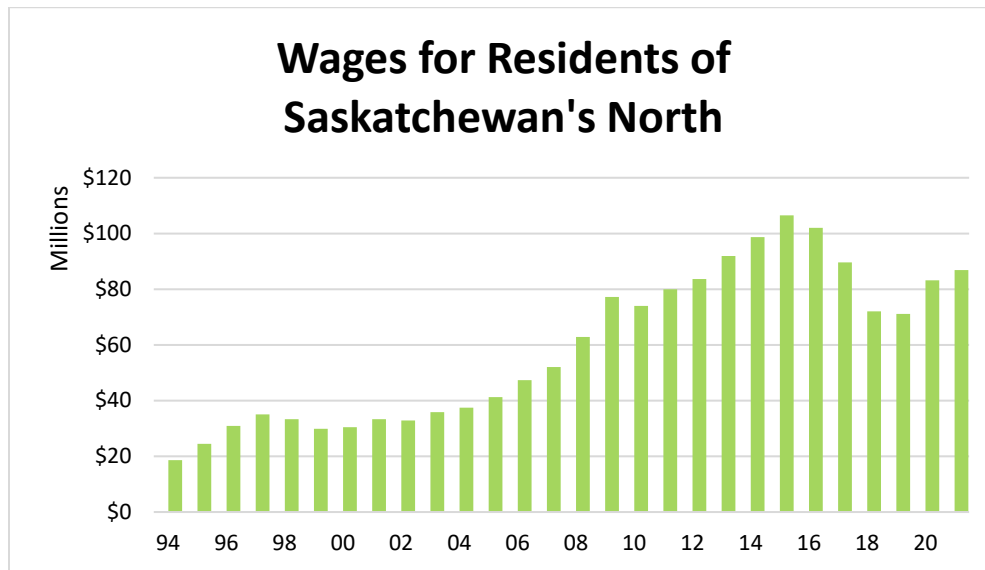
Other notable areas of procurement in Northern Saskatchewan are:

- Air travel: \$26.7 million
- Camp catering: \$17.4 million
- Fuel: \$4.2 million



Employee Compensation

Mining operations in Northern Saskatchewan paid out \$214.9 million in 2021. Of this amount, \$86.8 million was paid to RSNs. This accounts for 40.4 per cent of total wages.



Compensation Agreements for Loss of Commercial Income

Each mining operation agrees to provide compensation for the loss of commercial income that resulted from their lease of the land. Payments are made to individuals who 1) held a lease or permit to use the lands immediately prior to the establishment of the mine's surface lease; and 2) used the land to generate commercial income, such as from trapping.

As of December 31, 2021, the northern mining industry:

- Provided \$40,700 to 12 individuals, mostly trappers, as compensation for the use of leased lands held by the individuals prior to the MSLA being signed.
- Provided appropriate 5,000 litres of fuel as compensation to the above listed individuals.

Employee Services Commitment

In addition to the wages, other benefits were provided and employee suggestions are encouraged to enhance these services. Some of those benefits are listed below:

- Employee family assistance programs were made available to employees. These programs provided counselling supports to employees for mental health, addictions and other important issues affecting the mental and physical health of employees.
- Some employees were offered Employee Share Purchase Plans and/or RRSP programs. Some of these plans included employer-matching contributions of up to 50 per cent of total contributions, depending on the amounts being invested.
- Medical and dental benefits were provided to employees and their families.
- Some sites have an Elder Program. The goal is for Elders to provide advice and guidance for individuals that are experiencing problems in carrying out their responsibilities. This helps the employees be healthy and productive.
- Various programs that assist employees in making healthy lifestyle choices and contributing to a healthy and rewarding workplace.

- Employment equity, diversity, and respectful workplace policies and training sessions.

Education Promotion (Stay in School) Commitment

Mining organizations within Northern Saskatchewan have committed to help northern students with their educational needs. In 2021, mining companies provided scholarships and awards to several students.

- Over \$129,000 was provided to students in the form of scholarships and bursaries, \$20,000 was also provided as matching funding from the Government of Saskatchewan.
- Included in the previous amount is approximately \$8,333 to students in the Athabasca region as part of the Ya'thi Néné Scholarship program.
- Scholarships were available for Saskatchewan Indigenous students who entered second or third year of study with the College of Engineering or College of Arts and Science at the University of Saskatchewan pursuing these degrees: geology, toxicology, chemistry, geography, biology, computer science, physics or environmental sciences.
- 2021 marked 15 years of the Science Ambassador Program, University of Saskatchewan, bringing hands on science education activities and support to northern Indigenous communities in Saskatchewan. Communities receive hands-on support to curriculum from experts in the science area who provide demonstrations as well as promote post-secondary math and science careers. Due to COVID-19 there were no activities in 2021.
- Mining companies regularly visit schools and job fairs to promote employment and encourage students to stay in school. Visits were limited in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Due to summer shutdown as well as COVID-19, the mines were unable to accommodate any work placements.



Photo credit: Aurora Communications, Key Lake tour 2021
Northern Saskatchewan Environmental Quality Committee

Community Vitality Commitment

The goal of Community Vitality Monitoring Program (CVMP) is to monitor community vitality (the social well-being and quality of life of residents). The initiative arises from the recommendations of a joint federal-provincial panel on uranium mining developments in Northern Saskatchewan. As part of the MSLA, the province of Saskatchewan requires mine developers to work with government agencies to study the impacts of uranium mining operations on the vitality of communities in NSAD, through the

study of selected representative communities.

The latest report, focused on the sustainability of northern communities impacted by mining, will wait until a summary can first be presented at the Northern Saskatchewan Environment Quality Committee (NSEQC). The NSEQC was mostly inactive throughout 2021 due to COVID-19 and staffing.

The Government of Saskatchewan launched the NSEQC in 1995 to build trust and confidence in developments in the resource sector, particularly uranium.

Public Involvement Commitment

Uranium mining operations commit to work with governments, regulatory agencies, and community leaders to consult with and inform northerners about their operations in Northern Saskatchewan. In 2021, companies:

- Distributed project fact sheets and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) documents.
- Offered Cree and Dene translations.
- Incorporated visual aids.
- Used social media to advertise events (including virtual).
- Each year, a public opinion survey is conducted to gauge public understanding of, and support for, uranium mining and milling in Saskatchewan. Public support remains strong, with 82 per cent in favor of the activity province wide. Seventy-eight percent of northern respondents support the industry.
- Had 135 interactions (call, video, email) with northern communities, leaders, regarding collaboration agreements, employment, career opportunities.
- Donations to Northern Interests for 2021 totaled \$2.6 million.

For more information, contact:

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Northern Engagement – La Ronge
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Email: northernengagement@gov.sk.ca

Ministry of Immigration and Career Training,
Labour Market Services
306-236-7648

The summary is available at www.saskatchewan.ca by using the search box.