

# Uranium in Saskatchewan

**T**he province of Saskatchewan occupies the enviable position of being the world's largest producer of uranium; however, this position is slipping. Forecasts indicate that Kazakhstan will overtake Saskatchewan this year and that Australia could overtake it next year.

While Saskatchewan's position on the world stage maybe slipping, this valuable resources will still have a significant effect on the province.

The uranium deposits in Saskatchewan are large, contain high-grade ore and can be extracted at a very competitive production cost. So far, uranium has been produced from two main areas in Saskatchewan. The initial discovery and development of uranium deposits in Saskatchewan occurred in the Beaverlodge District (Uranium City) on the north shore of Lake Athabasca, while the richest uranium deposits in the world occur at or near the base of Saskatchewan's Athabasca Basin.



*Raisebore Drilling at McArthur River Uranium Mine.*

## The Uranium Industry in Saskatchewan

- The uranium mining industry spent more than \$188 million on salaries, wages and benefits for its direct employees. Of this, over \$58 million was paid to residents of Saskatchewan's North.
- The industry's contractors paid out an additional \$116.5 million to their employees.
- The value of goods and services purchased by the industry was \$769 million.
- Taxes and royalties of \$98.6 million were paid to the province of Saskatchewan, \$107 million to the federal government, and \$4 million to local governments. The total amount of taxes and royalties paid was over \$209.8 million.
- Approximately \$4.2 million was spent on licensing fees and \$2.4 million was paid in surface lease fees.
- \$2.7 million was donated to community and charitable organizations and another \$270,000 was given as scholarships and other forms of support to contribute to the education of Saskatchewan's youth.

There are currently three uranium mining operations in the province: Eagle Point, McArthur River and McClean Lake.

Uranium ore in Saskatchewan is mined by both underground and open pit mining. The ore is then crushed and milled to separate the uranium. The uranium, now a product known as yellowcake (U<sub>3</sub>O<sub>8</sub>), is shipped out of the province for conversion, enrichment and fuel manufacturing.

Uranium is an important resource to Saskatchewan. This vibrant sector attracts investments to the province from both global-scale players and junior companies. It employs approximately 3,000 people in Saskatchewan, about 80% of whom work at mine sites located in the province's north. This

creates significant direct and spin-off benefits for the local and provincial economies through wages, taxes and local investment.

Supporting this sector are mining-related programs at the province's post-secondary educational institutions and select Saskatchewan-based research facilities, such as the Slowpoke II reactor and the Canadian Light Source synchrotron. At current rates of extraction, Saskatchewan's discovered uranium resources would last approximately 45 more years. However, it is estimated that \$195 million was spent on uranium exploration in Saskatchewan in 2008, out of the approximately \$378 million spent in Canada as a whole, so there could easily be new deposits discovered across the province.