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New gold-mining technology clearing technical hurdles

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Mike MacFarlane



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Ted Blom



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Award-winning drilling company puts safety first

ZANDILE MAVUSO | FEATURES REPORTER

Safety is of significant importance to mineral exploration drilling company Boart Longyear, which has been supplying mining projects like iron-ore operations in the remote area of Schefferville in northern Quebec, Canada.

The US company has manufacturing plants at Mississauga and North Bay, which are both in Ontario, and was awarded a Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (Sharp) award from the Utah Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), on May 31, for its Salt Lake City manufacturing plant in the US.

This plant employs the same safety procedures as those at Boart Longyear's Mississauga plant, which manufactures rock drill and blast tooling, and North Bay plant, which manufactures coring tooling for the company.

Boart Longyear believes that safety starts with acknowledging, planning for and mitigating risks, which will result in fewer accidents in the workplace.

The safety programmes devised by Boart Longyear keep safety at the forefront and keep drillers informed on the latest

safety issues.

"The company's environmental health and safety system is based on personal responsibility, transparency and uncompromising safety. We have used these principles to empower employees to be responsible for their own safety and the safety of others," says Boart Longyear Salt Lake City plant manager **Drew Butler**.

He adds that each month five employees at every plant volunteer to be Safety Champions for the month. The champions make rounds each day looking for safety risks and alert management to hazards that need to be dealt with immediately. The management team at each plant also does daily safety walks and weekly risk assessments.

"The major initiatives implemented at Boart Longyear's global plants have been centred on recycling, improving the work environment and simplifying the processes. The elimination of hazardous substances from the plants and improving the dust collection systems are measures taken so that the work environment is improved," says Butler.

Boart Longyear believes that

the correct culture among its employees must be created at all times and in boosting morale by increasing employee buy-in for all practices.

"One of the most important resources and initiatives is to attract, retain and develop the best people in the industry. We continually invest in safety, skills training, team building and motivational training. We believe that investment in the people pays off in safety statistics and production," says Butler.

Awards

The Sharp award is presented to companies that maintain an exemplary safety and health management system. Together with the OSHA, Boart Longyear identified and implemented best practices to protect workers at all its plants by developing an innovative management system.

"Boart Longyear is one of only nine Sharp companies in Utah and it's all about making sure employees go home safely," says Utah commissioner of labour **Sherrie Hayashi**.



AT WORK

A Boart Longyear employee arranges diamonds in a mould which is used to create diamond coring bits.

The company also received a Genius Award in April for being a top patent company in 2011. In March this year, Boart Longyear's Minerals & Energy Drilling Services team in Martabe, Indonesia, was recognised for achieving six years of lost-time injury (LTI) free hours.

Further, on February 19, its team at the Calgary Rotary Zone achieved a significant safety milestone by completing one-million hours worked without a lost time incident LTI which translates into 1 221 days.

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"However, in Canada the maintenance hoists are not afforded the same degree of importance and often have to be fitted into the space remaining after the headframe is virtually complete.

Besides space constraints, Condra has had to meet speed, capacity and high-lift requirements set by its Canadian customers.

However, Kleiner emphasises that the company does not intend to take the high-lift leadership that it enjoys in South Africa across to Canada.

Instead, pricing strategies are being reviewed to expand the company's Canadian footprint in the segment for standard hoists, where competition is fierce.

"We are working closely with Indoc Cranes, which we see as the Canadian extension of Condra, on this pricing. Indoc is our only agent and we back them 100%.

"Both companies are confident of further expanding our share of the Canadian market over the coming months," concludes Kleiner.

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