

Press Release

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Products of applied research make their way to Vale Inco's Creighton Mine

Vale Inco to use MIRARCO Virtual Reality technology for mine safety and planning purposes

Sudbury, ON, March 12, 2009 — The findings of a six-year research collaboration between Vale Inco and MIRARCO are now being applied to operations at Creighton Mine in Sudbury. The Virtual Reality Laboratory (VRL) installed at the mine site will initially be used to understand seismicity underground but will also be used for mine planning, exploration and optimization purposes.

The lab was officially inaugurated in a ceremony at the mine today. MIRARCO Geological Engineer, Pavel Vasak was one of the presenters explaining how the research and development will allow for a better understanding of potential seismic activity and thus, safer mining practices.

"What we see today are the results of years of research being applied to the daily operations at Creighton Mine," said Vasak. "We've produced a tool that assesses all available data and then integrates that information into a visual map detailing potential seismic hazards. Using this tool at the mine site is a pro-active step to ensure working conditions are safe underground."

Vale Inco commissioned MIRARCO to do research into the creation of seismic hazard maps that visually represent areas of seismic activity. As Creighton Mine reaches the 8000ft level and beyond, the potential for seismic activity becomes greater. The hazard maps should help identify what steps can be taken to predict and deal with the associated risks.

"Creighton Mine is Vale Inco's oldest and deepest operating mine, having operated continuously for more than 100 years," said Mine Superintendent Andre Lauzon. "The skill of our people, coupled with the advances in technology represented by the Virtual Reality Laboratory, will help us operate safely and successfully for decades to come."

Seismic hazard visualization is only one of the many uses for the VRL at Creighton Mine. Engineers and geologists will use MIRARCO's open source visualization software, ParaViewGeo, to display the mine and ore body — from there, exploration and planning decisions can be made with more confidence and clarity.

"Here is a concrete example of research and development bringing value to the mining industry," said Andrew Dasys, MIRARCO Vice President. "Vale's commitment to applying research to their operations is now paying off. It's also a demonstration of Sudbury's ingenuity when it comes to improving the mining process in general, this tool can be applied to any deep mine looking to improve its hazard assessment process."

MIRARCO— Mining Innovation, Rehabilitation and Applied Research Corporation, founded in 1998, is a not-for-profit applied research and technical service company formed through collaboration between Laurentian University and the private and public sectors, located in Sudbury, Ontario, Canada. MIRARCO has installed several Virtual Reality Laboratories at mine sites internationally to improve mine safety and design. Visit www.mirarco.org for more information.

Vale Inco—Vale Inco is a leading producer of nickel, copper, cobalt and precious metals, based in Toronto, Canada. Vale Inco is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Companhia Vale do Rio Doce (Vale) (NYSE: RIO), the world's second-largest mining company by market capitalization. Vale Inco has more than 13,000 employees worldwide. Vale Inco is committed to the pursuit of sustainable growth by operating with respect for the natural environment and being an ethically and socially responsible company. Visit www.valeinco.com for more information.

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