



Magee/KCR

Laura Araneda speaks about her experience in the mining industry during the Sussex & District Chamber of Commerce annual general meeting on Thursday at the Sussex Golf and Curling Club.

Mining company to expand operation in Sussex area

By Shane Magee
Kings County Record

SUSSEX — Groundwork has started and tenders are being accepted for a new manufacturing facility in the Penobsquis area that is expected to

create 12 new local jobs to begin with, said the president of Vic Progressive Diamond Drilling Inc.

"I'm excited to say we're working out the logistics on building a new manufacturing plant on the outskirts of Sussex where we'll be building

specialized equipment for mining and specialized equipment for the oil and gas industry out west," Laura Araneda said Thursday evening.

While the company will start with 12 new employees, they will add more

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Chamber holds AGM

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over time.

"It's one of those things that we add a little bit here, a little bit there and keep growing," she said. The company already employs more than 80 people and is based out of Sussex.

Araneda was the guest speaker at the Sussex & District Chamber of Commerce annual general meeting.

More than 65 people attended the event at the Sussex Golf and Curling Club where she talked about her experience in the mining industry.

She said she's excited for the new opportunities the facility will bring the company which specializes in underground and surface drilling, post-fill projects, grouting and mine services.

The company does work at the PotashCorp mine in Penobsquis and works at NB Power's Mactaquac dam, drilling and grouting to relieve pressure on the cement.

"We have to diversify," Araneta said. "We've specialized in mining and exploration for the past 25 years, but this is something that we can work at with an awful lot of opportunity, especially with the north opening up," Araneda said.

"This kind of equipment is all very new, but it's a modification of what we've already been using."

She said it's a challenge to conduct exploration and mining in the north of the country in an economic fashion.

"Helicopters are sometimes the only way to bring equipment into and out of an area, so by creating alternatives for mining clients when can help

open up more areas and create jobs in our backyards," Araneda said.

Araneda, a mother of two sets of twins, also spoke about her experience growing up and taking over the multimillion-dollar mining company from her father.

Last year Araneda was included in a Chatelaine listing of the most successful female entrepreneurs in Canada.

In here speech to those at the chamber of commerce event she highlighted the changes the mining industry has undergone over the past 25 years.

"We've earned a bad reputation for environmental damage over the years," she said in her speech. "That reputation? It's not going to go away quickly. I believe you can explore for resources in a safe and responsible manner, that in order to extract our plentiful resources you don't have to extract our plentiful resources."

She said she believes we are just borrowing the environment and are responsible for leaving it in good condition for future generations.

"It's our responsibility to return what we've borrowed and to ensure what we've borrowed is in the same or better condition than when we borrowed it."

She said the industry, and her company, is working to improve the equipment they use to ensure when they do leave a mark on the environment, it is the smallest possible.

Araneda received a standing ovation after her speech from those attending the chamber event.