

Attention: News/National/Business Reporters and Assignment Editors

Corporate Knights Magazine announces best Aboriginal relations in extractive industries

Survey finds big differences between companies, but actions still lag for most.

(Toronto, Canada, April 21, 2009) Today, Corporate Knights Magazine unveiled the first *Corporate Knights Aboriginal Relations Ranking* for extractive industries. The comprehensive ranking identifies Canadian companies with active, developed, and inclusive Aboriginal relations practices and policies in place. Corporate Knights examined 28 companies based on size in four sectors: Forestry, Mining, Oil and Gas, and Utilities.

The top companies in the 2009 *Corporate Knights Aboriginal Relations Ranking* are as follows:

Forestry: Domtar Corp.

Mining: Cameco Corp.

Oil and Gas: Suncor Energy Inc.

Utilities: British Columbia Hydro and Power

“With over 40 per cent of Canada’s resource rich land controlled lock, stock and barrel by Aboriginal communities, the ability to get along with our First Nations, Métis and Inuit compatriots will underline the difference between companies that succeed and companies that fail in the resource sector,” said Toby Heaps, Editor of Corporate Knights. “In an increasingly resource constrained world, this ability to get along with indigenous communities counts big time not just in Canada, but also as a bellwether for making projects work in further-flung parts of the globe.”

The Corporate Knights survey found that despite the lip service paid to joint management, shared decision-making was not backed up. Only two out of the 28 companies have an Aboriginal director on their board.

On a more encouraging note, the recent decision by the Supreme Court on the duty to consult has helped to create an environment where 18 out of 28 companies we examined have a codified employment policy on Aboriginal relations.

Companies did well if they had a defined long-term vision for Aboriginal relations with explicit, ambitious targets and demonstrated results to date. Responsible companies consult Aboriginal communities early and often throughout the extractive process, and include Aboriginal representatives on Boards of Directors and management teams. Progressive companies pass on the benefits accrued from extraction through profit sharing and the gradual transfer of long-term assets.

Domtar had a long-term, successful sawmill partnership with the Waswanipi First Nation. Developed in 1995, it included specific objectives and metrics in the areas of employment, community involvement, and training. In 2007, the Waswanipi First Nation opted to take full ownership of the sawmill and purchased Domtar’s 50% share.

Cameco is Canada's largest industrial employer of Aboriginal people and has an Aboriginal representative on its Board of Directors. Fifty per cent of its workforce is of Aboriginal descent, with a goal to have this proportion increase to two-thirds.

Suncor has several joint ventures with Aboriginal groups and was the only oil and gas company with an Aboriginal representative on its Board of Directors. It also has a strong “buy local” policy.

BC Hydro and Power has had an Aboriginal Relations department since 1992, and was the first utility to seek the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business’ Progressive Aboriginal Relations (PAR) status.

Corporate Knights’ Aboriginal Relations ranking looked at five categories: Employment, Business Development, Community Relations, Environmental Impact, and Governance. The ranking examines Canadian operations only, and only those operations with significant interaction with Aboriginal peoples and/or their land. Information used in the assessment was culled from publicly available sources, including recent sustainability and annual reports, company websites, and press reports from the last two years. Each sector was examined separately.

Please go to www.corporateknights.ca for a full list of the indicators.

The companies at the bottom of the ranking demonstrated a lower commitment, relative to their industry peers, to consulting and working with Aboriginal groups to share the benefits of the extractive economy. There was a strong link between poor environmental compliance and poor relations with Aboriginal communities. While there are a growing number of positive stories, all companies have room for improvement.

“We encourage not just extractive industry companies, but all companies, to view strong Aboriginal relations as a key to future success,” says Melissa Shin, Managing Editor. “Consultation and a genuine commitment to addressing Aboriginal concerns will lead to greater prosperity for all Canadians.”

The full results and methodology of the Ranking are available on www.corporateknights.ca/aboriginal on April 22 and are summarized in the Earth Day issue (Vol. 7.4) of Corporate Knights, distributed to over 100,000 Canadians on Earth Day, April 22, 2009.

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About Corporate Knights: Founded in 2002, Corporate Knights Inc. is an independent Canadian-based media company focused on promoting and reinforcing sustainable development in Canada.