

Company says Pumpkin Hollow deposit boasts many advantages

By Patrick Abanaty
Staff Writer

Outside of aesthetics, it could be said that Mason Valley's lifeblood through the decades consists primarily of agriculture and copper mining; and with copper prices continuing on the upswing, a large property east of town is slated to become part of that legacy.

The Pumpkin Hollow deposit was first located by U.S. Steel using airborne magnetic surveys in the 1960s. In the decades to follow, many, including former local mine owner Anaconda, drilled at the site

to determine project feasibility.

In the interim, copper prices later fell, placing many prospects in the area on hold; however, recent months of increased copper prices have renewed interest.

Nevada Copper, the company looking to mine the 12-square mile Pumpkin Hollow site nearly three miles east of Pursel Lane and southeast of the city, is currently in the economic and environmental assessment stages of the mine.

Hopes are to be in the feasibility stage by next year and mining the property by 2010.

Tim Dyhr, of Reno-based company The Mines Group and liaison for the project, spoke with the MVN this week saying the project would follow all steps necessary to ensure an environmentally safe endeavor as well as a reclamation plan when all is said and done. The Mines Group is handling environmental and permitting procedures with the mine.

Dyhr said the previous core samples taken at Pumpkin Hollow have been wonderfully preserved. Initial studies have shown copper at the site at more than 6 billion pounds at up to six percent in some

areas.

If all goes to plan, the Pumpkin Hollow Mine would include both underground and open pit operations depending on ore depth. Also, a sulfuric float process would be used rather than acid leaching processes like Arimetco used at Anaconda in the late 1990s. When all is said and done, exports could include up to 30 percent copper concentrate. Along with copper, a large iron ore body also exists on the property, which might later be mined following the copper extraction.

Of course, when one thinks of large

copper mines in or near Yerington, the first thing they likely think of is the old Anaconda Mine and the site's most recent operators Arimetco. They might also think of the related environmental contamination and ongoing cleanup effort, which stands to continue at the site for years to come. Dyhr said the contamination and complications experienced with the old Anaconda Mine would not be the case with Pumpkin Hollow.

First of all, he said all environmental impacts must be studied and a reclamation

Boasts

From page A1

plan in place prior to mining. Also, with the possibility of Nevada Copper being purchased by larger mining firms down the road, a clean, efficient site is also an economic goal.

Helping with this is the site's

ore body being primarily surrounded in limestone. Dyhr said Anaconda's ore was encased in acidic rock, which produces natural sulfuric acid when resulting tailings are exposed to water and air. Also, since the site was never mined prior to this endeavor, no legacy contamination issues need be addressed.

"This site is like a dream come true," Dyhr said.

In the community, Nevada Copper is also willing to provide resources and information to local schools and the State. This will help them incorporate into the curriculum skills necessary for those interested in mining. To this, Dyhr noted many of tomorrow's miners would be using computer technology more so than muscle.

"We're now the high-tech industry," he said.

What's more, Dyhr noted this would create many jobs for Yerington residents as well as in outlying areas such as Silver Springs and Carson City.

For more information on the Pumpkin Hollow site, one can visit online at <http://www.nevadacopper.com>.