Athabasca employee profile:
Catherine Nagus, Athabasca Basin Security

With contribution by Stan Dugan, Regional Manager, ABS

Like many jobs, an Industrial Security Officer (ISO) at a mine site has routines and procedures to follow. But you never know for certain what to expect on any given day. “During our patrols we watch for things like fire, property damage, or people in areas they shouldn’t be,” says Catherine Nagus, an Industrial Security Officer working at the Cigar Lake uranium mine site. “Our job is to protect people and property, and over the years, I’ve seen lots of things happen. Every day is different.”

Nagus started with Athabasca Basin Security (ABS) as a full-time employee at Cigar Lake Uranium mine in summer of 2006, and she has worked for ABS in the thirteen years since. “I heard about the job when I was working for a different company, and went and got my security course and then applied to the company, and the rest is history,” she says. In 2016, she transferred south to the Jansen project for a period of time, working in the potash industry. Early in 2019, she moved back to Cigar Lake, close to where her home is. “I was born and raised in Wollaston Lake,” says Nagus. “I enjoyed my time down south but it’s good to be back home.”

Like most ISOs, Nagus works a 2-week in and 2-week out rotation. On one rotation, she will work nights and the next rotation will be days. “While on days, a typical shift will consist of mostly gatehouse duties where I’ll verify paperwork and identification of people, vehicles and commodities that are wanting to gain access or leave site,” says Nagus. “I will participate in conducting luggage searches at the airport of incoming employees. I will also conduct a patrol to break up the 12-hour shift at the gate.”

Night shifts are twelve hours and are comprised of patrols of the camps, offices and outlying areas of the site and responding to the gate to allow access on or off site. Sometimes animals will wander into site. Most of the time, these animals leave without incident, but not always. Shortly after midnight on August 30, 2016 Nagus came upon a young man being attacked by a wolf. She managed to scare off the animal and then rendered first aid to the man and called the Emergency Response Team. The young man was flown off-site and was fortunately able to make a recovery. Nagus was honored with the St. John’s Life Saving Award for her actions and bravery in December 2016. Nagus remains humble about the events of that night. “As the mother of four boys, I just wanted to protect him,” she says.

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Like all security officers in Saskatchewan, Nagus completed a Saskatchewan Justice Approved Security Guard Training Course prior to starting with ABS. This 40-hour course is a requirement for a security officer position with any company in Saskatchewan. “ABS has conducted this course several times over the years,” says Ron Hyggen, CEO of ABS. “We also provide training on an ongoing basis to help our staff prepare for any situation that arises. I am incredibly proud of Catherine and our staff who consistently demonstrate level-headed thinking in sometimes very stressful situations.”

Nagus likes to relax and loves to play bingo. Nagus has also enjoyed her time at ABS. “It has been a great learning experience,” she says. “I have met a lot of interesting people. It has made me a better person and taught me a lot about life. It has been a good career and I would recommend it to anyone. Put your application in and come join our team!”
5Buds Opens Cannabis Store in Warman
North Battleford and Yorkton to follow later this year

On October 17, cannabis was legalized in Canada. And on November 30, 5Buds Cannabis opened the doors to its first store in Warman.

“The first couple months of operations have been incredibly exciting,” says Corey Tyacke, Retail General Manager of 5Buds. “We’ve accomplished a lot in a short period of time, and to be a part of a brand-new industry like this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.”

In June, the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority announced recipients of the retail cannabis selection lottery process. Indigenous-owned Synergy Five Investments received licences in three cities: Warman, North Battleford and Yorkton.

“After that, it was go-time,” says Tyacke, who was hired in September. “Our team has been incredibly busy working to get the stores open, and just as importantly, building relationships. We’ve built excellent relationships with so many people – the suppliers, SLGA and their team, the City of Warman, the City of North Battleford, and the City of Yorkton, our neighbouring businesses, local media, RCMP, and more. We’ve strived to be a corporate citizen that everyone can be proud to have in their neighbourhood.”

As of mid-February, 22 of the 51 cannabis stores in Saskatchewan have opened. Many have run into issues getting steady supply. “We are really lucky – we haven’t experienced the same challenges as some of the others in our industry,” says Tyacke. “We’ve been able to offer a range of choice that is similar to the BC government website and is unmatched by any other cannabis store in Saskatchewan. I am proud of the strong relationships we’ve built with the licenced producers and our wholesaler and I think this has made a big difference and is what allows us to provide such an extensive selection to our customers.”

Sales have so far met projections, but one of the biggest challenges facing the fledgling industry is the black market. Recent reports have shown that the black market continues to hold a large majority of the cannabis market. “I think this will take some time to work through these challenges and there is opportunity for us to grow,” says Tyacke. “There are a number of reasons why so many people are continuing to purchase from the black market. For example, we can’t yet offer edibles, cbd-only and other products that people want and the black market is still offering. And it’s also difficult for the public to distinguish a legal shop from an illegal one, especially online. We do have a website and we are offering online orders with home delivery, but while doing a search online, it’s difficult for customers to distinguish a legal shop from an illegal one, and many of the illegal shops do a great job of looking like they are legal. I think everyone in the industry would like to see people shift from the black market to the legal one, and we will work through these challenges in the coming years to help ensure Saskatchewan customers have access to regulated cannabis products.”

North Battleford opened February 25 and Yorkton will follow later this year. “We are incredibly excited to enter the North Battleford market and the Yorkton market later this year,” says Tyacke. “We look forward to growing with the cannabis industry and expanding our brand to other locations in the years to come.”

Synergy Five Investments is a limited partnership with four partners: Athabasca Basin Development, Des Nedhe Development, Peter Ballantyne Group of Companies, and Prince Albert Business Development. Shareholders of these companies include 13 different First Nations in Saskatchewan. Synergy Five Investments operates cannabis stores under the name 5Buds Cannabis.

For more information, contact ctyacke@5buds.ca www.5buds.ca

The 5Buds store in Warman was designed to have a natural, timeless feel with a prairie vibe. Customers come from all over the province with many making the drive from Saskatoon.
“Building a future through investment” is accomplished by building wealth for the Athabasca communities, donations, community distributions, building a reputation and building capacity. The key to making all benefits possible is in building a wealth for the communities – without this foundation, the other benefits would not be possible. Here are a few recent examples of the ways Athabasca Basin Development and its investments give back:

2018 Northern Tour
The 2018 Northern Tour took place on December 11. The tour was hosted by the Athabasca Basin area transportation committee and attended three Athabasca communities. One of the key mandates of the northern tours is to expand the knowledge of northern opportunities and challenges by taking business leaders, media, ministry officials and others to visit remote northern communities.

Christmas in the North
In December, ABD co-sponsored the seventh annual Christmas in the North event. ABD partnered with ABS, Team Drilling, and Points Athabasca to bring over 900 books to the region for kids in pre-K to grade 8. West Wind aviation, Cameco, Orano, Cameco, Arctic Beverages, Points Athabasca, Scoles Fine Arts, and Hands On Outreach.

Annual Athabasca Student Supper continues to grow
This year’s Athabasca Student Supper had RSVPs for nearly 300 attendees, which handily beat the 2017 student supper’s record attendance of 196. The event was moved to the Art Hauser Center in Prince Albert this year to accommodate the larger crowd. The annual event, which celebrates the achievements for all students from the Athabasca region who are attending secondary or post-secondary school in the south, has become a popular gathering for students and their families. Special thanks to the Strong family for all their efforts running the event and providing entertainment, and to all the many companies that provided donations to make this event possible: ABS, Team Drilling, Flyer Electric, Tru North Yamaha, Transwest Air, West Wind Aviation, Orano, Cameco, Arctic Beverages, Points Athabasca, Scoles Fine Arts, and Hands On Outreach.

Fond du Lac Build
Fond du Lac Denesuline First Nation in partnership with Fond du Lac Development had a plan to stimulate the economy, train ten of its members and provide much needed housing for the members of the First Nation. Fond du Lac identified a need of additional housing units for its growing population. Understanding the problems of having pre-built houses brought in and seeing the opportunity to train its members to build future housing for the community, Fond du Lac began a plan to build 2 four-plex housing units and 2 two-plex housing units.

The First Nation and Fond du Lac Development worked with Points Athabasca Contracting to see this plan come to reality. This training and employment project included Points Athabasca providing a journeyperson carpenter and supervisor to train ten Fond du Lac members to build the units for a period of 120 days. The houses are currently at the drywall stage and with the opening of the ice road, new materials will be coming in, with a plan to complete the project this spring. Northern Career Quest provided a wage subsidy to assist with employment costs and Athabasca Basin Development provided administrative support during the planning phase.

Tru-North acquires ownership of Alumarine Boats
Production will be moved to Prince Albert

In January 2019, Tru-North RV, Auto and Marine announced ownership into Alumarine Boats. Operations will be moved from the current base in West St. Paul, Manitoba to Prince Albert.

“We are so incredibly excited to make this announcement,” says Ron Bonneau, General Manager for Tru-North. “Alumarine boats are well known in the industry and to our customers, with a reputation of being built north tough. We really believe in this product and were very excited when the opportunity came for us to be involved.”

Alumarine Boats will be moving its production from Manitoba to Prince Albert immediately, to a location just north of the city. “The move to Prince Albert will create new jobs in our area,” says Bonneau. “We already have two employees working there and we hope to increase production capacity and employ ten people in the next couple years.”

Tru-North has no plans to make any changes to boats design or production. “We plan to stick to the exact same specs that customers are used to,” says Bonneau, “it’s what people are expecting and we are happy to deliver. The bottom line is that it’s just a really great boat.”
By Kathy Christmann

In response to an identified need for qualified medical responders and paramedics in Northern Saskatchewan, Athabasca Basin Medical teamed up with the Prince Albert Grand Council – Dene to provide training at the Medical First Responder 2 level for eight Athabasca students. The goal was to provide students with a basic understanding of emergency medicine while encouraging them to further their knowledge.

Throughout the fourteen-day program, four students from Black Lake, three from Stony Rapids and one from Wollaston Lake started their intensive training with Standard First Aid and CPR C for Health Care Professionals, then quickly progressed to learning anatomy and physiology, oxygen therapy, monitoring blood glucose, taking vital signs including blood pressures, pulses, respiratory rates and lung sounds.

Each day, the group would spend the first half hour practicing their clinical skills they had learned in previous sessions, then spend the next eight hours expanding and building on their knowledge of emergency medicine. Although they attended class from 8:30 AM until 6 PM, many were hitting the books in the evening, often until midnight.

The final challenge came on Day 12 when Derek Keller, the Director of Primary Care for the Athabasca Health Region, was invited to help assess the overall student performance in scenarios as a second evaluator. To respond as a Medical First Responder through a community responder program, trained responders must be licensed under their health region in accordance with SASK Health.

“This group of students should be very proud of their strong work ethic and dedication to the program,” says course instructor Kathy Christmann, Medical Services Manager at Athabasca Basin Medical. “Their commitment to study was shown in the 100% attendance rate, 86% overall class average, and the fact that 100% of the participants received their Medical First Responder Level 2 certification.”

AB Medical, a division of Athabasca Basin Medical, has been working with PAGC, AHA and other groups to deliver several training courses in the Athabasca Region. “We have been honoured to work with AHA to deliver several SFA/CPR C training courses to their front-line staff, and Team Drilling to provide SFA/CPR C/WHMIS and TDG training for their Driller’s Helper course, and the communities of Stony Rapids and Fond Du Lac,” says Christmann. “I’m excited to have had these opportunities to provide training to the people of the North, and I look forward to future opportunities.”

Plans are currently in the works to offer another Medical First Responder Course in spring.

Team Drilling provided the driller training, with the course covering topics such as WHMIS, drill rig set up, core recovery, tripping rods, underground communication procedures, safety topics, and many more. “Lyle Rogers and Chris Marinic from Team Drilling provided the training and I think they did a fantastic job covering what participants needed in the fourteen days,” says Fleming. “The training took place at the A&L facility in Stony Rapids. The building and yard were ideal for this training. The office was great for the first aid and ready to work programs, as well as the classroom training for the driller assistance. There was plenty of shop and yard space to provide the hands-on training.”

The trainees were from Fond du Lac, Wollaston, Hatchet Lake, Black Lake and Stony Rapids. Ten participants passed the course, with each receiving a certificate of completion. “From an employer perspective, we consider this program to be a success,” says Fleming, “and we are hoping to conduct another similar training session in early summer.”

For more information, please contact Robert Fleming at rfleming@teamdrilling.com

This fall, a Diamond Drill Helper Training Course was offered in Stony Rapids. The goal of the course was to prepare participants for potential upcoming jobs in the drilling industry.

The course was a joint effort between KCDA, Northlands College, Points Athabasca, Prince Albert Grand Council, Yáthi Néné, AB Medical, and Team Drilling. “It was a real team effort to put this training program together,” says Robert Fleming, CEO of Team Drilling. “The training started off with First Aid/CPR training provided by Kathy Christmann at AB Medical, followed by some excellent Ready to Work life skills program training by Cara Greeyes at KCDA. Other partners provided funding, facilities, in-kind donation, and assistance with organizing.”

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10 Athabasca students participated in the Team Drilling diamond drill helper training course.

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10 Athabasca students graduated from the Diamond Drill Helper Training Course
Last fall, West Wind announced the appointment of a new CEO, Michael Rodyniuk, who began with the company on September 10. Michael replaced interim CEO, Pat Campling. Michael brings a wealth of experience to the company, with over 30 years of aviation management experience spanning the globe. Over the past three years, Michael has held the position of President and CEO of Wasaya Group Inc., a similar company to West Wind Aviation, who’s principle business is an airline serving First Nations’ communities in Northwestern Ontario. During his time there, Wasaya restructured its operations, eliminated what was once a crippling debt, and was recapitalized through a debt and equity transaction.

“I am excited to be joining West Wind Aviation as its CEO,” said Michael. “We’re building a strong team and company here in Saskatchewan. I commend the work Pat, and the entire West Wind group of companies’ team accomplished making changes while providing a safe airline with excellent service for its customers. I am committed to safety and service. Our customers can expect us to continue to work hard making continuous improvements coupled with the safest and best possible travel experience.”

Michael’s leadership experience includes serving legacy airlines (Air Canada, American Airlines, Swissair, United Airlines), low cost (WestJet, Air Canada’s Zip), regional airlines (Exchange Income Corporation’s Bearskin Airlines, Calm Air, Custom Helicopter, Keewatin Air, Perimeter Aviation), Hawaii Island Air and Wasaya Airways. He has experience in aviation finance and leasing through his participation with Willis Lease Finance Corporation. He has successfully restructured many airlines over the last decade.

Michael’s track record includes a strong dedication to safety. “My thoughts and prayers are with those who were effected by the crash that took place in Fond du Lac in 2017,” he says, “Since then, a lot of work has been done and we continue to make positive changes, including providing a culture of safety first within the airline and a focus on excellent service for our customers. We remain committed to taking every step possible to provide safe, reliable air transportation services to the communities we serve.”

Michael currently serves as Chairman of the Board of Directors of West Canitest R&D Inc. (WestCaRD), an initiative of the General Electric Company, the Government of Canada and Standard Aero focused on research and development of aviation turbine engines. Michael holds an MBA from the University of Manitoba and is accredited by two United Nations agencies; Airports Council International (ACI) and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), as an International Airport Professional (IAP). Michael also recently received ICD.D from Institute of Corporate Directors.

Michael’s first task as CEO was to travel to the Athabasca communities. “It was a pleasure to visit the Athabasca and meet people in the communities,” said Michael, “The scenery in the North is stunning and the people warm and welcoming. I look forward to working with the Athabasca communities and getting to know everyone as we work together to provide service for the north.”

Meet the ABD Board of Directors

From Left to right: Coreen Sayazie – Black Lake, Anne Robillard – Hatchet Lake, Merv McDonald – Stony Rapids, Teri Daniels – Wollaston Lake, Earl Lidguerre – Fond du Lac, Joyce Powder – Camsell Portage, Dean Classen – Uranium City.
Arctic Beverages participates in Northern Manitoba School Recycling Project

Last fall, Arctic Beverages received recognition from the Canadian Beverage Container Recycling Association (CBCRA), The Province of Manitoba, and the communities of Cross Lake and Norway House for their participation in the Recycle Everywhere Northern Schools program.

“Together, we have diverted thousands of containers from landfill and recycled them back into beverage containers or other consumer goods,” says Sean Post, CEO of Arctic Beverages. “We look to more than double the number of participating schools in the North next year. A great job by Kevin Gasper and Greg Robins and the Transportation team in helping keep us clean across the North”

Since 2017, Arctic Beverages worked with the students of Cross Lake and Norway House to collect recyclable beverage containers and deliver them to a material recovery facility as a backhaul.

“Following the success of the pilot project, the Canadian Beverage Container Recycling Association (CBCRA) and Recycle Everywhere are pleased to officially launch Recycle Everywhere’s Northern Backhaul Schools Project and to have the support of the Government of Manitoba as we prepare to expand into more northern Manitoba schools,” said Ken Friesen, Executive Director of CBCRA in a recent news release. “We’re thrilled with the enthusiasm from students and teachers, and the progress they achieved in just one year. None of this would be possible without our generous partner Arctic Beverages, who will continue to donate backhauling services as we expand the project.”

Congratulations to Arctic Beverages for winning Pepsi’s Bottler of the Year Award

Left to right: Denis Sacks, Senior Director of Franchise Development, Pepsico Canada, James Kirkness, Director of Sales and Marketing, Arctic Beverages, Tania Canas, Marketing and Promotions Manager, Arctic Beverages, Harold Bonazew, General Manager, Arctic Beverages.

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About Athabasca Basin Development

Athabasca Basin Development is an investment company committed to building and investing in successful businesses. Investments include partial or complete ownership in construction, industrial security, electrical, diamond drilling, logistics, road maintenance, aviation and more. The company is owned by the seven communities in Northern Saskatchewan’s Athabasca region.

Watch for our next newsletter Summer 2019.

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