

KAMLOOPS THIS WEEK

Survey project expected to bring jobs



Pilots Galen Smith, left, Steve Gebhardt, project manager Alison McCleary and co-president Luise Sander stand next to the Cessna 208 Caravan on the tarmac at Fulton Field on Friday.

DAVE EAGLES/KTW

A new airborne geological survey project covering most of the Southern Interior will create much-needed jobs in the region's mining industry, the minister responsible for the industry said Friday.

Randy Hawes was at Kamloops Airport to help unveil Geoscience BC's new QUEST-South survey project.

"The surveys will lead to staking and then exploration on that," he said. "And exploration is jobs. Exploration is money."

QUEST-South is a geological surveying project that aims to create a large database for those involved in the exploration industry and, hopefully, increase mining.

Friday's announcement was billed as "Phase 2" of QUEST-South, which covers the area from Williams Lake to the U.S. border.

"This is an area the size of England," said Gavin Dirom, president and CEO of the Association for Mineral Exploration British Columbia.

"It's a vast area."

Geoscience BC CEO Lyn Anglin said the area is promising.

"The QUEST-South area has significant potential for copper-gold and copper-molybdenum deposits, but much of the area in the north is obscured by young volcanic rocks, which make exploration challenging," she said.

"These surveys will provide the exploration community with new data in which to evaluate this prospective part of B.C., reduce the risk and help to attract and guide more activities and investment."

The airborne component of QUEST-South, which will see specially-equipped aircraft map out and survey the gravity levels of the region, is being handled by Ottawa-based Sander Geophysics Ltd.

The QUEST-South data is expected to be released in early-2010.