



## NANAIMO MUSEUM

100 Museum Way, Nanaimo, BC, V9R 5J8  
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Media Release

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For Immediate Release

### **Nanaimo Museum Opens New Coal Mine Exhibit**

A popular coal mine replica that once entertained visitors at the old Centennial museum building behind Port Place Mall is finally being resurrected, only bigger and better, at the new Nanaimo Museum this weekend.

The installation of the new exhibit was made possible thanks to a major sponsorship from Mr. Ed Yewchin along with the hard work and dedication of many volunteers at the museum.

“Some of our members and visitors were disappointed when we closed the old mine shaft,” says Debbie Trueman, general manager of the Nanaimo Museum. “But that decision is now one for the history books as we open our new and improved coal mine exhibit as part of our permanent gallery.”

Built with help from movie set designers, the new coal mine shaft is as close to an actual mine as most people will ever get. Besides having the look and ambiance of an underground shaft complete with coal cart, tools such as drills, picks and shovels, as well as a nomadic winch, there is also the famous boss whistle, various rescue and blasting equipment, an interesting geology component, a new and improved interactive coal mine map and panels on how coal is formed. There is also a children’s interactive area making the exhibit a true family affair.

Another interesting feature of the new coal mine exhibit involves a round brass tag. When a visitor arrives at the museum, they can request a tag that can be used to trigger an audio story of an actual miner and the role he played in shaping the industry here in Nanaimo.

“We encourage anyone with an interest in our unique coal mining history to come and experience what a historic mine was all about,” says museum curator David Hill-Turner.

The date for the opening of the new coal mine exhibit was chosen to correspond with the second birthday of the new museum and the Serious Coffee outlet attached to the museum.

The Nanaimo Museum is open from 10 am to 5 pm seven days a week throughout the summer. Call 250-753-1821 for more information.

### **History of Coal Mining in Nanaimo**

Following in the footsteps of Spanish explorer Alejandro Malaspina, whose purpose was to explore the Strait of Georgia, the Hudson’s Bay Company established a fortified post in the area in 1849, and the discovery of coal in 1852 led to permanent settlement. In 1854, 24 families arrived from England to settle in Colville Town, the name first given the settlement, after Andrew Colville, governor of the HBC. The name was gradually discontinued and was little used after 1860.





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In 1862 the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company bought out the HBC mines and expanded operations. Completion of the Esquimalt to Nanaimo Railway (1886) spurred development. The city grew with its increasing coal output. Production from the three main seams in the area reached its peak in 1923 when more than 1 million tons were mined. Once the easily accessible coal was mined, however, it became increasingly dangerous and expensive to extract the fuel and by the early 1950s the city turned to forest products.

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For more information contact David Hill-Turner or Debbie Trueman at 250-753-1821.