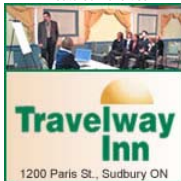


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## Travel, career-building is part of the lure at Knight Piesold Consulting Engineers

By: Ian Ross

It would be very easy for Knight Piesold Consulting Engineers to steal that old Navy recruiting logo about signing up and seeing the world.

The hallways of the Main Street offices are adorned with dramatic landscape photos taken by employees on project work in Greenland, Mexico, Madagascar and Canada's Far North. The best ones, selected in their company's photo contest, end up in the annual calendar.



Knight Piesold director Ken Brouwer works at the Sierra Gorda copper project in northern Chile where the consulting engineering firm is involved in a pre-feasibility study for an open pit mine. (Photo supplied)

Knight Piesold is an international company of consulting engineers and environmental scientists who work on mining, environmental, hydropower, water resources, roads and construction services for projects around the world.

"In mining and renewable energy, which is the focus of our work, travel is key for a lot of people that want to get out, see things and get exposures to new cultures," said Ken Embree, Knight Piesold's Managing Director at the North Bay office.

With 700 employees worldwide, Knight Piesold has offices in Argentina, Australia, Chile, Ghana, Peru, South Africa and the U.S. It means employees are exposed to a wide variety of work on a number of projects.

A good portion of their clients are in the mining industry so they travel wherever their clients are. It also affords an opportunity to assigned to projects around the world.

Embree's list of global assignments have taken him into the U.S., Peru, Argentina, Chile, Greenland and in the Asian countries of Kurdistan and Uzbekistan.

Extensive travel is how he learned Spanish during one project stay in Argentinan home. "At night after the work was done, we'd have a drink and they'd speak English and I'd speak Spanish."

One of the engineers from North Bay is assigned to their project office in Ghana for a year where she's working on a number of environmental projects at a gold mining site.

"In Greenland, we were working there (on a mining project) during the summer time where it's 24-hour daylight and one of our employees was really pleased to tell people he got a sunburn working the night shift."

The North Bay office has 35 employees with 125 more in Vancouver.

"We're two offices within one company in Canada. We share projects, share people, and transfer back and forth as needed."

Embree said it is a "lifestyle thing." One engineer in North Bay found it to be more affordable to transfer from the Knight Piesold office in Vancouver to the Gateway City.

Embree, a Saskatchewan native, did the same nine years from Vancouver, and is now approaching 20 years of service with the firm.

At Knight Piesold, professional development is king.

The company has run a Global Career Development Plan for the last two years intended to fit the right people in the right location.

There is a very formalized continuing development program which starts on the day employees are hired which is described in their Welcome package. It includes the assignment of an in-house mentor to help them get that going.

Embree mentors nine employees and meet with them on a semi-annual basis – once in June and again at year's end – to review their career development plans.

"You've committed to do to this," Embree explains to them, "and if you don't, we want to know why and make sure we catch up."

There are a number of steps in the training program which begins with a mentor assigned to a new employee who presents their concepts for approval.