Nouveau Monde CEO on the significant demand for graphite from the battery material market

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March 29, 2018 — "Battery material is becoming a significant market for graphite. It used to be 9% of the market a few years ago. Now it is 25% of the market and it is getting higher and higher." — states Eric DeSaulniers, President, CEO and Director of Nouveau Monde Graphite Inc. (TSXV: NOU | OTCQB: NMGRF), in an interview with InvestorIntel's Andy Gaudry.

Andy Gaudry: How is PDAC 2018 treating you this year?

Eric Desaulniers: Pretty busy. I guess that is why we are coming, but busy. I am sure I will not have time to meet everyone I want to meet, but I am doing my best.

Andy Gaudry: What is new and exciting with Nouveau Monde?

Eric Desaulniers: A lot of good is going on actually at the moment. You saw we just announced drill results. In the next few weeks we will have an update of our resource estimate for the South Zone. Then we will start our feasibility study, bankable feasibility study of the commercial project. At the same time we are building a Phase 1 capacity that will be up and running in June. We just finished stripping the whole mining area for the next 2 years. Then we will start to blast in the spring and we will start mine that in our plant in June. Phase 1 will be able to produce 2,000 tons of flake concentrate in the next 2 years to start qualifying our product. A lot of stuff is going on, on all different fronts.

Andy Gaudry: That is fantastic news. How is the graphite market in Canada these days?

Eric Desaulniers: It is a very interesting year for the graphite market. On the demand side the demand is picking up significantly with the steelmakers in China resuming operations significantly. At the same time, battery material is becoming a significant market for graphite. It used to be 9% of the market a few years ago. Now it is 25% of the market and it is getting higher and higher. There is one big guy in the room. It is Syrah Resource. Everyone is looking at Syrah who started production in January. They have a lot of different problems, like I think one of their circuits caught fire and it is now shut down for a few months. All the market is looking at this new capacity that is coming online. Will it be enough to fill the growth in the demand? It is a very interesting year. On top of it there are 23 big factories, battery factories, being built on the planet. By 2021-2022 they will require an extra 450,000 tons more of graphite. With this demand there will be a supply squeeze at some point in the next 5 years. We want to be there right on time with our project to fill part of this supply…to access the complete interview, click here