

NEWS RELEASE

Distributed May 1, 2020

Remembering lives lost to BC's worst mining disaster

No. 1 Esplanade Mine explosions took place 133 years ago

Summary

Shortly before 6:00 pm on May 3, 1887, two explosions occurred in the No. 1 Esplanade Mine. This tragic accident took the lives of 150 miners. To mark the anniversary and honour the memory of the lives lost, flags located at City of Nanaimo facilities will be lowered to half mast from Friday, May 1 to Monday, May 4, 2020.

The explosions of the No. 1 Esplanade Mine are known as the worst mining disaster in British Columbia's history and second worst in Canada (the mining disaster of 1914 in Hillcrest, Alberta killed 189 miners). A jury blamed the explosion on the firing of an unprepared and badly planted charge that ignited accumulated gas fuelled by coal dust.

Once it reopens, visit the walk-through coal mine exhibit in the Nanaimo Museum to learn more about Nanaimo's coal mining history and this tragic accident. In the meantime, find more information on this award-winning exhibit here: www.nanaimomuseum.ca/permanent-exhibit/the-coal-mine.

Strategic Link: n/a

Key Points

- On May 3, 1887, 150 miners lost their lives.
- Flags will fly at half mast in memory of the lives lost in the No. 1 Esplanade Mine disaster.
- A memorial plaque to remember the miners who died from the explosions stands in place of the site of the No. 1 Esplanade mine on Milton Street (1151 Milton Street). In anticipation of the anniversary of the mining explosions, City parks staff completed some restoration work to the site

Quotes

"No single event scarred our City and its people more than this disaster. It is our obligation to never let this event disappear from our community's memory."

Leonard Krog
Mayor
City of Nanaimo

Quick Facts

- In 2015, Council passed a resolution to lower the flags at all City of Nanaimo facilities to half mast on May 3 in memory of the lives lost in the Nanaimo coal mining disaster of 1887.

Continued... Remembering lives lost to BC's worst mining disaster

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