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Three-year agreement reached between union and NGM

(Elko, Nev.) – On March 23, 2023, Nevada Gold Mines (NGM) and Operating Engineers Local 3 reached a three-year agreement, resulting in an 8.5 percent increase over the next three years (2023-2026), among other benefits.

According to Local 3 District Representative Scott Fullerton, “The greatest highlight to note, is that in December of 2019, we could not receive recognition [from NGM] and our members faced a large amount of uncertainty and insecurity. Today, we negotiated a three-year agreement which will continue Local 3’s 58-year association with that mine site. It says a lot about the dedication of the membership, the determination of Local 3 and the importance of both parties communicating effectively. It is amazing when you look back and see a relationship that went from being completely adversarial to a relationship that has effective interaction and rapport, definitely positive progress amongst everyone.”

When two of the largest mining operations in Northern Nevada, Barrick Gold Corp. and Newmont, merged in 2019, to form the single largest mining operation along the Carlin Trend, NGM, changes happened for everyone. The individual miner noticed differences, as paychecks were suddenly signed by a different company and wages changed. The union that represented more than a thousand of these miners since 1965, Operating Engineers Local 3, also felt the changes, as NGM suddenly refused to recognize the union and its contract that had been in place prior to the merger. In January/February 2020, the union filed an Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) charge against NGM, and in August of that year, the ULP was settled, resulting in NGM agreeing to recognize the union.

Subsequent ULPs were filed, regarding pay, classification and other issues, but slowly, communication between the union and NGM improved, and Local 3 members saw the result. From January through March 2022, more settlement and memorandum of agreements between the two parties were reached and finalized, resulting in more than \$1.1 million in backpay and other damages. In March of 2022, NGM and Local 3 agreed to a one-year extension with a 2.5 percent pay increase for the workforce.

The parties went into negotiations in February of this year, which led to the final agreement that will stand until 2026.

For Local 3 member and miner Carl Peters, who helped negotiate this latest agreement, “This agreement means a great deal of stability for the next three years,” he said. “It’s just a good feeling to be able to breathe now, knowing from where we came from,

when the joint venture occurred, to where we are now and ratifying a new, three-year contract, it's a really good feeling, that stability, and it's an excellent agreement."

The underground miner doesn't have to sit on the negotiating committee, as the role is voluntary, but he explained that the reason he does it is because, "The people I work with are like brothers and sisters. We're family out there. Mining is a close-knit community."

For him, the union and his participation in its process "is the only thing that holds this company in check. There's no competition for Labor anymore."

Local 3 member/miner Jackulyn Kinhead has been around the mining industry her whole life. (Her husband is also a miner.) The former accountant works in the underground mine, operating trucks, graders and loaders. She also served on the negotiating committee and noted, "We didn't lose anything; we came out ahead on everything."

She wanted to serve on the negotiating committee, "to know the behind the scenes process of everything." Regarding her union protections, "I like the protection, people on my side, if something happens, I am able to make a phone call."

Parties will not negotiate again for another three years.

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*Operating Engineers Local 3 represents the interests of people who build, serve and protect. Most of Local 3's 37,000+ members work as heavy-equipment operators and construction workers, but the union also represents miners and public employees, such as maintenance workers and police officers. The training program for construction professionals gives employers access to the highest quality of workers, providing their business with a competitive edge while raising the quality of life for Local 3 members. Local 3's jurisdiction covers Northern California, Northern Nevada, Hawaii and Utah, and its membership makes up the largest construction trades local in the United States. **For more information, visit www.oe3.org.***