



INTERNATIONAL

MINING

Technology

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HALL OF FAME

## Nigel Bain / SAFETY



Nigel Bain recently retired as Executive Director Nevada with Barrick. When he was Turquoise Ridge General Manager he was the 2016 winner of the International Society of Mine Safety Professionals' Leadership Award. In addition to recognizing Bain, the Society bestowed a 'Recognition for Internal Achievement Award' on the entire Turquoise Ridge mine.



"Turquoise Ridge has worked hard to change its safety culture and it's very satisfying to receive this recognition," Bain said at the time.

Turquoise Ridge, an underground operation located in northern Nevada, is situated on terrain that is difficult to mine. The ground is highly fractured and rock quality is poor, making safety a challenge. At one point in its history, the operation was included among a group of Nevada mines known as 'widow makers' due to the high number of fatalities that had occurred at them.

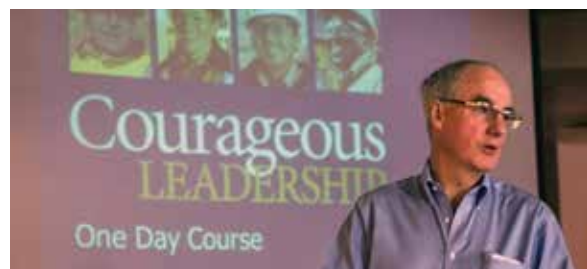


Bain became General Manager in mid-2011 and quickly set about revamping the mine's safety culture. "One of the things you notice about him very quickly is that he maintains a very high field presence," said Simon Pollard, Safety and Health Superintendent at Turquoise Ridge. "He gets down into the mine, asks questions and treats people with respect. He's just a very genuine person."

That authenticity and the fact that Bain so obviously cared for the well-being of his people helped him earn their trust. So when he began to make changes to enhance safety, the workforce understood he had their best interests at heart. "With Nigel it's never about trying to make the place look good so that he looks good," Pollard said. "He wants the place to do well because he's part of our team and he wants the team to do well; safety is just the most important aspect of that."

One of the bigger changes that Bain oversaw at Turquoise Ridge was the transition from jack leg drills to fully-mechanised mining. Fickle and difficult to handle, the hand-held drills require miners to work directly beside or underneath the rock face—a risky proposition at Turquoise Ridge. Yet the transition, which began several months after Bain became GM, raised concerns. The miners were comfortable with jack legs, enjoyed the challenge of operating them and feared production would suffer if the drills were phased out. Production did indeed suffer initially and Bain encountered some resistance. He never wavered.

"Nigel, like every General Manager, has production pressures," Pollard explained. "But he didn't bend. I remember him saying, 'If we give an inch on this, we show that we don't really care about safety.' That's the kind of leader he is. He doesn't buckle to pressure from above or below, or take the easy way out. He does the hard thing, the right thing."



For his part, Bain says it's critical to stick with a plan when you're convinced you've made the right choice. "You've got to remain true to your vision," he said. "People really do see that actions speak louder than words."

While he sticks to his guns when he believes he's made the right choice, Bain was always open to different views. Indeed, he expected to be challenged by his people and allowed his leaders to lead. "He understands he can't do it all himself," said Jon Laird, Mine Operations Superintendent at Turquoise Ridge. "He listens, follows up, asks for opinions and acts quickly when convinced those opinions are correct. It's one of the things that make him very, very strong."

Bain has a calm, understated manner about him that belies a passion and enthusiasm to continuously improve Turquoise Ridge's performance. Pollard said he'd never seen the man raise his voice in the five years they worked together. "He's not a confrontational leader," he said. "You don't see him barking at people. He leads by strength of character."

Bain believes fervently that strong safety performance and strong production are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, he believes they go hand in hand, noting that success in both areas rests on the ability to consistently make good decisions, particularly when a crisis occurs. One of Barrick's core values is to act with urgency, a notion that encapsulates Bain's expectations of his people. "Acting with urgency doesn't mean rush and hurry up," he says. "It means make rapid, thoughtful decisions—and thoughtful is the key part—rather than charging ahead when things go wrong or the pressure is on."

Turquoise Ridge's track record during Bain's tenure speaks volumes about the safety culture that he helped instill. The operation recently celebrated its third consecutive year with no lost-time injuries. In one 12-month stretch during this period, the mine had no injuries at all. In 2010, Turquoise Ridge's total reportable injury frequency rate was 2.5.\* It has since been brought down to 0.32. That stellar safety performance did not come at the expense of production as Turquoise Ridge delivered its best production ever in 2015.

"We've seen a remarkable change in the safety culture at Turquoise Ridge," said Bob Dechant, Director of Safety and Health at Barrick. "All of the folks at the operation deserve credit, but Nigel has certainly led his team towards a different understanding of how to conduct their business, and safety has been at the forefront. I don't want to exclude our other general managers and sites because they're doing some exceptional things as well, but when you look at the turnaround at Turquoise Ridge, I think the leadership that Nigel has shown has just been exemplary."

\*Total reportable injury frequency rate is a ratio calculated as follows: number of reportable injuries multiplied by 200,000 hours divided by the total number of hours worked. Reportable injuries include

fatalities, lost time injuries, restricted duty injuries, and medically treated injuries.

Jon Laird, Underground Mine Operations Superintendent at Barrick Hemlo, adds that Bain's achievements "support the theory of 'If you get the safety right the rest will follow.' In addition to the safety improvement gold production also roughly doubled during Nigel's time at TR."

