

## BUSINESS BC

## ASIA-PACIFIC REPORT | C9

## KEEPING TRACK | C10

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## UPWARDLY MOBILE HOMES

Before there was a sub-prime crisis in the U.S., there were rising house prices — soaring, in some areas. But not everyone reached for the stars and tried to obtain the three-bedroom-with-garage American Dream with a sub-prime mortgage they couldn't really afford. Some set their sights lower, going for the more affordable mobile home situated in any of the tens of thousands of trailer parks scattered throughout the U.S. This had an unexpected consequence on the demographics of the tornado-bait set — America's trailer trash became slightly gentrified. For example, in Suffolk County, N.Y., which boasts approximately 40 trailer parks, the median household income increased to \$43,825 in 2005, from \$33,015 in 1990, a much bigger jump than the overall increase in the county, to \$78,900 from \$76,547. At the same time, the percentage of trailer-park residents with a college degree took a double-wide jump, to 18.2 per cent in 2005 from 7.7 per cent in 1990, and the percentage lacking a high-school diploma dropped to 14.5 from 33.7.

## WW III MAY BE FOUGHT WITH WII

The U.S. military may soon enlist Nintendo's Wii remote-control unit, as well as Apple's iPhone — the soldier of the future may well be a robot operated remotely from a relatively safe distance. Thus engineers at the U.S. Department of Energy's Idaho National Lab are experimenting with the high-tech devices to enable operators to concentrate more on tactics than joysticks. The Wiimote translates operators' hand movements into movements of the robot without distracting the operator from the visual feedback on his laptop. And of course an iPhone is a big improvement over the laptop if the operator has to stay as mobile as his robot.

## WATCH OUT FOR PINK ICE

French researchers have found a way to use the same technology that tells you when a can of beer is cold to warn you about road conditions. A clear coating can be applied over road surfaces. When the temperature drops to a level that could produce black ice, which is hard to spot, the coating turns pink, which can easily be seen.

## BUSINESS BC TUESDAY

**CYBERLAW:** Business BC columnist Michael Geist writes on the intersection of business, technology and law.

## B.C. SNAPSHOT

## Owning a piece of the Rock pays off

Owners of detached houses in White Rock saw the biggest payoff of any area in the Fraser Valley Real Estate Board's region in terms of average price increases from March of last year to last month.

Average house price, % change March-March	
White Rock	+17.3%
Langley	+6.8%
Mission	+6.5%
Abbotsford	+6.1%
Surrey	+6.0%
North Delta	+3.7%
All areas	+8.1%

Source: Fraser Valley Real Estate Board

## Chinese return to B.C. to secure badly needed raw materials



WARD PERRIN/VANCOUVER SUN

Burnaby entrepreneur Xizheng Dong moved to Canada from Xian, China in 2001 after a career with China's central bank, dating back to the country's economic reforms of the early 1980s. He invests in Canadian mining companies and helps them link with Chinese mainland buyers.

## China's shopping spree

**COMMODITIES** | Firms in search of resources are buying Canadian mining assets

BY JOANNE LEE-YOUNG  
VANCOUVER SUN

It has taken over three years, but a growing string of transactions suggests that China, in its quest to buy mining resources anywhere and everywhere, is back in town.

In late 2004, when a political firestorm sabotaged a \$5-billion bid by China's state-owned Minmetals Corp. to buy Noranda, one of Canada's oldest mining companies, the Chinese took their money elsewhere — first to Chile and then a myriad of other destinations.

There have been a few miniscule Chinese investments in Canadian mining since then, but basically there was a freeze of sorts until last summer, when China's Chinalco bought Vancouver-based Peru Copper Inc. and its Toromocho project in Peru for \$840 million.

Then, in January, Minmetals and

another large Chinese company, Jiangxi Copper, announced their \$455-million purchase of Vancouver-based Northern Peru Copper Corp. and its Galeno copper project in Peru.

Most recently, in March, China's Jinchuan Group picked up Calgary-based Tyler Resources and its Bahuerachi project in Mexico, for \$214 million.

"To be honest, the Chinese had been window-shopping in Canada for a long time," said Jeremy South, a Vancouver-based partner at Deloitte, the consulting firm. Now, however, "we have certainly moved from window-shopping to some pre-dawn raids."

Deloitte did not advise the Chinese companies involved with the above three deals, but South said the company is involved with six to 10 mining transactions involving Asian groups looking to buy Canadian mining assets. About half of these are Chinese companies, he said.

"These are good-size, big deals that have been around but not consummated in the last six months" for a variety of reasons, including the state of capital and debt markets and the credit crunch.

"There is certainly momentum," said Egizio Bianchini, managing director and head of BMO Capital Markets' metals and mining group, which did advise the above Chinese companies.

In a phone interview from Beijing, Toronto-based Bianchini said: "The focus by the Chinese [state-owned enterprises] is to grow ... and they need to fuel that growth in a lot of commodities. There's a real shortage here."

"They are looking for iron ore, copper. Based on that, that there are going to be more deals."

He added that China's "needs are more acute than anyone else's, just by virtue of how quickly their economy is growing."

"The Chinese companies are

focused. They are disciplined. And they know what they need and they are going about it in a very systematic way."

"I don't see a haphazard, willy-nilly buying spree. I think they are looking for targets and going after them."

Xizheng Dong, a Burnaby-based entrepreneur, sees this from a unique vantage. Dong moved to Canada from Xian, China, in 2001 after a career with China's central bank dating back to the country's economic reforms of the early 1980s. Today, he invests in Canadian mining companies and helps to link them with larger mainland Chinese buyers.

He believes that China's deep foreign reserves and its feverish desire to secure vast resources has "caused worry for others, and this has been a big obstacle for deals in Canada."

"The high speed of change in China is fast, fast, fast. It can't be fast enough for us," he said. However, on the Canadian side, "if you have always lived in the city, so to speak, you don't know what it's like to be hungry. You have plenty, so you don't grab or eat much."

See **CHINESE FIRMS** C8

## Dental salon works on entire face

BY BRIAN MORTON  
VANCOUVER SUN

Looking for a one-stop way to get your teeth whitened, your wrinkles softened and your smile enhanced?

An upscale dental salon that is now officially open in Coal Harbour plans to do just that by offering what it calls a fusion of cosmetic dentistry and facial rejuvenation — in a "luxurious" atmosphere.

"This is a smaller boutique office where we're treating one patient at a time and it's highly

personalized," Janet Roberts, owner of A Smile Above Design Inc. at 451 Bute, said in an interview. "This is focused on cosmetic and comprehensive restorative dentistry for adults. We're also offering botox ... and other facial rejuvenation [options]."

"In one location you can whiten your smile, perfect it with natural looking veneers, restore your bite and often get rid of head and neck pain in the bargain, and refresh the appearance of your face."

Roberts, a dentist, is co-owner

of the salon with her husband Warren Roberts, also a dentist. The two also own a second office, The Fine Art of Dentistry, in Tsawwassen.

Roberts said they opened in downtown Vancouver partly to take advantage of the need by business people to look their best.

"One reason we located here is because we're close to the downtown core, the business district," said Roberts. "The people who often have this type of work done are successful business people. They're in front of people and

being confident is very important to them."

According to a release, the art of cosmetic dentistry not only refers to simply making teeth look nice, but encompasses techniques that are used for building functional and natural-looking teeth at the back of the mouth as well as the front.

Comprehensive bite rebuilding is a large part of what the salon will offer — and that can be pricey.

"We're not the cheapest place in the city," Roberts admits. "For bite rebuilding, you can look at

\$50,000 if it's a comprehensive reconstruction.

"You could spend the equivalent of a very nice car, but your teeth will be with you much longer."

Roberts said they've invested \$800,000 in the new office and that the salon contains many green options, including being paperless — "everything is computerized" — using digital X-rays, and avoiding amalgam or mercury.

Roberts believes cosmetic

See **CLINIC HELPED** C8