

Press Release

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Sudbury R&D links to world's fastest moving economy with Virtual Reality

MIRARCO – Mining Innovation launches first linked Virtual Reality Studio in China for mining and industrial safety research

Sudbury, ON, November 7, 2006: Laurentian University's premier mining research company, MIRARCO (Mining Innovation, Rehabilitation and Applied Research Corporation), has established the first Virtual Reality (VR) studio in Asia linked to a North American VR facility. Dr. Chunan Tang, Professor at the Department of Natural Resources and Civil Engineering at Northeastern University (NEU) in Shenyang, China, contracted Sudbury-based MIRARCO to design and build the facility.

Andrew Dasys, MIRARCO's Start-up Director and project systems manager, welcomes this new development. "By providing a turn-key system, including hardware, software and training, MIRARCO has created a virtual bridge between China and North America, allowing additional training and technology development projects to be undertaken."

"We desired a technical solution to better understand the geomechanics of our region's metal and coal mines," stated Dr. Tang, also Director of NEU's Centre for Rock Instability and Seismicity Research, "MIRARCO not only offered a strong technology track record, but also has research scientists and engineers that can collaborate with us for years to come, through our linked VR Studio."

The official opening coincided with the 9th China National Rock Mechanics Symposium where about 400 Chinese professionals gathered. MIRARCO's Director of Asia Projects, Dr. Ming Cai presented the keynote speech and demonstrated how MIRARCO has pioneered the use of Collaborative Visualization to improve complex data interpretation.

MIRARCO's President and Chair for Rock Mechanics and Ground Control at Laurentian University, Dr. Peter Kaiser, sees the potential that is available for Canadian companies to make meaningful linkages with Chinese affiliates. "We know that China is one of the world's leaders for technology

adoption and the world's fastest growing economy. A project linking VR studios between Liaoning Province, China and Northern Ontario, Canada provides an opportunity to implement leading edge technology at NEU, and also to create visualization infrastructure that paves the way for future research projects. Building on the past 20 years of research, MIRARCO's Geomechanics Research Centre is unlocking some of the keys to seismic hazard qualification in underground mines, helping to create safer mines. Sharing and evolving this knowledge with researchers around the world is very rewarding.”

“This project is the result of many years of relationship building and understanding the critical needs of NEU researchers,” states Cai. “Our custom software add-ons, developed at MIRARCO, were one of the components that attracted Chinese attention. Helping researchers more easily model their data and find improved ways to interpret their datasets is one of our key strengths. ”

A Chinese delegation is visiting Laurentian University's Virtual Reality Laboratory over the next few weeks to complete the advanced data modelling and interpretation training. The opening has generated significant interest in China and MIRARCO is currently working with a partner company to define the needs for additional Virtual Reality facilities in the mineral sector.

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