



NEWS RELEASE

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HECLA REPORTS ROCK BURST UNRELATED TO PREVIOUS EVENTS AT THE LUCKY FRIDAY MINE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 15, 2011

COEUR D'ALENE, Idaho -- Hecla Mining Company ("Hecla") ([NYSE:HL](#)) is reporting that the rock burst that injured seven miners Wednesday night at the Lucky Friday mine near Mullan, Idaho, is unrelated to two previous fatal accidents which occurred earlier in the year. In addition, all seven Hecla miners are expected to fully recover from their non-life-threatening injuries. Most of the miners were treated and released by area hospitals, with the most serious injuries involving lacerations, a broken arm and a broken pelvis. There were 25 Hecla employees and 18 contractor employees underground in the mine at the time of the rock burst. All were immediately evacuated, and most were not in the vicinity of the affected area.

"Thankfully, our miners were not more seriously injured and all seven are expected to fully recover," said Phil Baker, President and Chief Executive Officer for Hecla. "There's no connection to the previous fatal events. Our peoples' safety is very important to us, and we are working hard to get the mine back on track to its longstanding safety record prior to this year, characterized by more than 25 years and 8.5 million man-hours without a fatality."

On November 16, 2011, shortly after 1 a.m., Hecla reported a seismic event that caused a rock burst in approximately the same location as this most recent incident at 5900 feet below surface, in the area of the pillar that crosses through the 30 vein. This rock burst was triggered by mine blasting at the end of a shift. As a result, no one was in the area at the time of the incident and no injuries were reported.

The most recent incident also occurred at 5900 feet below the surface. Rock failures around a mining excavation can be triggered by natural occurrences or by mine blasting. Baker said Hecla was in the process of installing designed tunnel supports, which consist of a steel liner and other materials such as shotcrete, in that particular area. This method is very similar to that used in road construction in underground tunnels which is meant to provide a support canopy for the roadway.

"Both rock bursts occurred approximately in the same location; however, this most recent event was not triggered by mine blasting, since blasting had not taken place within the previous 24 hours. Consequently, we need more information about what triggered this rock burst," Baker said. "The mine is currently shut down to give us time to examine this in conjunction with federal Mine Safety and Health Administration representatives."

For up-to-date information and an earlier video message from our President and CEO, Phil Baker, please visit Hecla's homepage of the website at www.hecla-mining.com.

Cautionary Statements

Statements made which are not historical facts, such as strategies, plans, anticipated payments, litigation outcome (including settlement negotiations), production, sales of assets, exploration results and plans, costs, and prices or sales performance are "forward-looking statements" within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Words such as "may", "will", "should", "expects", "intends", "projects", "believes", "estimates", "targets", "anticipates" and similar expressions are used to identify these forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements involve a number of risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from those projected, anticipated, expected or implied. These risks and uncertainties include, but are not limited to, metals price volatility, volatility of metals production and costs, environmental and litigation risks, operating risks, project development risks, political risks, labor issues, ability to raise financing and exploration risks and results. Refer to the company's Form 10-K and 10-Q reports for a more detailed discussion of factors that may impact expected future results. The company undertakes no obligation and has no intention of updating forward-looking statements other than as may be required by law.

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