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NEWS

Heger promoted to general manager at BNI

Center, North Dakota—Mike Heger, a 14-year veteran of BNI, has been named the company's general manager. Heger's promotion comes as Wade Boeshans, BNI president and general manager, departs ALLETE to pursue a new opportunity.

"Mike is passionate about positioning the mine to continue operating successfully for many years to come. His experience, operational and analytical abilities, and commitment to a strong safety culture will serve him well in his new leadership role," said Pat Cutshall, ALLETE vice president and corporate treasurer who has broad oversight of BNI. "With Mike's leadership, BNI will continue its support of carbon-capture technology to help secure a cleaner energy future while remaining committed to the North Dakota lignite industry."

Heger joined BNI in 2008 and has held the positions of senior mine engineer, engineering manager and production manager. He was named director of operations in 2019.

"I'm optimistic about BNI's future and look forward to the challenges and opportunities ahead," Heger said. "I'm proud to be a part of this team and contributing to BNI's track record of safe, responsible and environmentally sound mining."

Boeshans has taken a position with Iowa-based Summit Carbon Solutions, which focuses on carbon capture and storage for biorefineries. He will remain at BNI until early July to ensure a smooth transition.

Bethany Owen, ALLETE chair, president and CEO, said Boeshans has been a tremendous leader and a strong safety advocate for BNI and ALLETE.

"One of Wade's many strengths is his ability to forge relationships founded on integrity, respect, and credibility, which have been so important as BNI has navigated the ever-evolving external world," Owen said. "I am grateful to Wade for his leadership and friendship over the years and for his development of the strong and experienced team at BNI. I am confident that with Mike's leadership, the entire BNI team will continue this momentum for a more sustainable future for ALLETE and the state of North Dakota."

Boeshans said the urgency to find energy solutions that balance environmental concerns and energy needs of consumers is increasing.

"North Dakota is uniquely situated to meet the demand for environmentally and economically sustainable energy, and BNI has been a leader in advancing carbon solutions for a decade," Boeshans said. "I am humbled and honored to have led BNI for the past 12 years and proud of how we have positioned the company for success with a talented team that lives our values every day, the progress of the Project Tundra carbon solution, and a recapitalized mining operation with over 100 million tons of coal under permit. I couldn't be prouder of the team or more confident in the future of the company. The work BNI is doing complements what other companies are doing to advance carbon solutions, and I'm excited to work on carbon capture from another perspective to benefit North Dakota and the region."

BNI's Center Mine, located near Center, North Dakota, celebrated 50 years of mining in November 2020 and delivers between 4 and 4.5 million tons of lignite to Minnkota's Young Station each year. BNI is working with partners such as Minnkota and the state of North Dakota to advance clean carbon solutions, including carbon sequestration technology, that are critical to the coal industry and could help solve climate issues.

BNI Coal is a subsidiary of ALLETE, which is headquartered in Duluth, Minnesota.