



Keeping region on track



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MINING is big business in the Goldfields and tomorrow the community will have a chance to listen to what companies have in store for the region in the next few years.

The What's Down The Track Forum is an initiative of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Goldfields-Esperance Development Commission and the Chamber of Minerals and Energy WA's Eastern Regional Council.

Each presenter, from a wide range of commodities, has a vested interest in the Goldfields. "It will give participants the opportunity to meet a group of the most important decision makers in our region," KBCCI chief executive Hugh Gallagher said.

"You won't get a better chance than this to find out what they want and how to meet their needs – the forum is about business today and tomorrow."

For the first time the forum will have strong representation from the iron ore sector. With new projects in development in the Yilgarn region, there are significant prospects for Goldfields businesses to benefit.

Yilgarn Iron Producers Association chairman and managing direc-

tor of prospective iron ore producer Mindax, Greg Bromley, said the emergence of the Yilgarn province would generate employment.

"Iron is already being shipped through Kalgoorlie to Esperance and this activity already impacts on employment in the region," he said.

"Other producers are poised and the production is expected to rise significantly beyond the present eight million tonnes each year.

"The demand for skilled workers and engineering support will increase – the start-up phase alone will employ many hundreds of workers directly and indirectly."

Mr Bromley said the net result was potential employment of thousands of additional workers, both directly and indirectly in the Goldfields with flow-on effects in skills development and community enrichment.

He said the expected growth of the West Australian resources industry and iron ore mine lives extending to beyond 35 years would complement the often volatile price cycles of gold and nickel.

"Gold is doing gangbusters now, but traditionally the Goldfields takes serious hits when gold and nickel prices are down," Mr Brom-

ley said. "In my 35-year association with the Goldfields since the early seventies, I have witnessed a number of boom-bust cycles that might have been buffered by a solid major industry like iron mining.

"The Pilbara is now 50 years in the making and still going strong.

"My own company Mindax and our Mt Forrest project out of Menzies has given me an increasing depth of experience of the iron business and I have a strong belief in the potential offered by opening up the Yilgarn.

"Iron ore mining will insulate the Goldfields economy and lift the base of economic activity delivering long-term, incremental growth that will flow through the community."

"You won't get a better chance than this to find out what they want and how to meet their needs."

– HUGH GALLAGHER