



U.S. Antimony eyes Bolivia offtake pact

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New York --

U.S. Antimony Corp. is looking to sign an offtake agreement at Raptor Ventures LLC Inc.'s newly commissioned Sorpresa antimony mine in Bolivia, a company executive told *AMM*.

The company made a recent trip to Bolivia to inspect the property in anticipation of inking a deal, according to Matt Keane, head of sales and customer service at Thompson Falls, Mont.-based U.S. Antimony. "We recently spent a week down there with them," he said.

Raptor's parent company, Houston-based Planet Resource Recovery Inc., is also in talks with a Chinese offtake partner for the project, Kurt Neubauer, Planet Resource's chief executive officer, told *AMM*. The offtake agreements will be completed by October, he added.

The company will have to work through a local buyer who will sell material to the offtake partners due to export issues, a company spokesman said.

Sorpresa was officially inaugurated on Sept. 15 with the "customary cultural mining rituals blessing," the company said. Since that time shafts have been cleared, blasting has started and raw ore is being brought to the surface for sorting, the company said in a statement. Production is set to ramp up to capacity within 10 to 15 days after the mine's startup, the spokesman said.

The mine will produce about 300 tonnes of raw ore per month, which at a purity of 58 to 67 percent would yield between 174 and 200 tonnes of metal, Neubauer said. Planet Resource is still evaluating whether to sell ingots or trioxide. "We have the capacity for both," he said. "If we keep production in South America, we will most likely do ingots."

Raw material bound for U.S. Antimony would go either to its U.S. facility or to its processing plant in Mexico, which has been sourcing material from small local miners, Keane said, noting that Sorpresa's production would alleviate U.S. Antimony's current supply problems.

News of Sorpresa's rampup comes at a time of unprecedented tightness in the global antimony market. Antimony is trading at an all-time high of between \$10,200 and \$10,800 per tonne in the domestic market and prices are expected to rise as Chinese output has been limited by the

government's crackdown on energy consumption. The United States imported 23,000 tonnes of antimony in 2009, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

"It's pleasant that for once you're at the right place at the right time," Neubauer said of the project's timing.

The company is also looking to bring two nearby antimony mines with similar capacity online in the near future.

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