

# Altius plans share buyback

**BY CRAIG JACKSON**

The Telegram

The board of directors of St. John's-based Altius Minerals Corp. has approved a plan to purchase upwards of one million of the company's common shares at market prices over the next year, a transaction designed to enhance share value by lowering the total number of shares trading on the open stock market.

The move could be considered unusual for a junior mining company that's dependent on capital funding raised through the sale of shares.

But Altius president Brian Dalton said Tuesday the company has reached "a bit of a turning point."

Dalton said the company has reached the stage where it isn't as "reliant as it used to be on the market, entirely, for its funding."

The business also has "more than adequate cash reserves," he said.

Considering Altius has a 0.3 per cent interest in the Voisey's Bay nickel/cobalt/copper development in Labrador, it will start to receive royalty payments soon.

Dalton said he can't speculate on the amount of money Altius stands to gain until he has received the first cheque and ironed out the finer financial details.

The company has stated in the past there's a possibility its annual royalty cheque from the Voisey's Bay project, based on nickel prices at the time, could be in the \$1.5-million range.

"If we didn't have cash coming in, we definitely wouldn't use up our cash to buy those shares," Dalton said.

Most companies that purchase their own stock often cancel them out so the number of shares in the market is reduced.

That would, hopefully, lead to a higher share value for existing shareholders.

"We haven't made a decision on it, but the idea would be for cancellation," Dalton said.

"For every one of those shares we buy and we cancel, it just shrinks the total number of shares in the company overall and makes every share that's remaining that much more valuable."

Purchasing its own common shares doesn't indicate the company is preparing to seize control of more shares to move forward with mineral projects in this province, he said.

"It's just a normal sort of capital structure management, that's all," he said.

"When we started building this company, we issued shares at a lot of different stages to raise money we needed to buy things and, to be honest, we've looked forward for a long time to the day when we can start to be on the other side of it."

If Altius required capital, it wouldn't buy shares, he said.

Dalton said, however, if the company believes within the next 12 months that the market value of the share is less than what Altius believes the company is worth, it doesn't have to purchase shares.

*cjackson@thetelegram.com*