

Greenland Fights Climate Change with New Prospects

Nicholas Pastura

The Arctic is warming, the ice and the snow are melting, and it's warming faster than the rest of the planet. "We're now losing spring Arctic snow cover at a rate faster than the models predict," says research scientist Chris Derksen. The temperatures in northern Greenland have gone up 4.5 degrees in the last 15 years. Some scientists predict that the temperature may be up 14 to 21 degrees higher by the end of the century.

Ice packs that cover fjords are becoming too unstable for dog sled and snowmobile traffic. Winter fishing is essential to feeding the people in Greenland, but conditions necessary to do so are becoming increasingly dangerous or impossible. The largest employer in the town of Narsaq, a shrimp factor, closed when crustaceans starting heading for cooler water. Eight commercial fishing ships are now down to only one. Narsaq's population has halved in the last decade. Greenland has one of the world's highest suicide rates, and suicides are rising. Despite these difficult issues, great things could be on the

horizon for Greenland.

Maps of the massive mineral deposits in Greenland have been drawn up by the Danish government for decades, as Denmark is the parent state. Most past attempts to mine have failed due to impossible or expensive conditions, but with warmer temperatures arriving, this is set to change. Just outside of Narsaq sits one of the largest deposits of rare earth metals. "This is huge; we could be mining this for the next 100 years," says geologist Eric Sondergaard.

The possibilities that can be brought forth from these new prospects are important to both the people of Greenland, and their government. As labor union leader Vittus Qujaukitsoq puts it, "One of our goals is to obtain independence." Denmark pays Greenland about a half billion a year, money that Greenland is heavily reliant on. This annual money was frozen in 2009 at its current rate, and scheduled to decrease in the future. With the vast revenues that could come from mining, Greenland could become self-sufficient. "I think this will be the future," says Green-

land's housing and infrastructure minister, Jens B. Frederiksen, "but this is a difficult phase."

New employment is almost a guarantee for residents, and Greenland Minerals and Energy, an Australian-owned company, has begun teaching young men in drilling and learning to speak English. It has plans to build new roads, a new port, and a processing plant. A local abandoned apartment block may be converted into a hotel, and Narsaq's airport, threatened with closure, may not only be kept open, but expended.

The future and this transitional period will be difficult for Greenland, but for now, they're making the most of it. It's a hard place to be put in, and while many fear the environmental damage that the mining industry can further bring, there are still families, men, women, and children that need to be taken care of. The backbone of Greenland's industry and livelihood, cannot be sustained as the climate changes. In our lifetimes, many other Arctic areas, and possibly non-artic areas, are going to face socioeconomic changes brought about by warming temperatures.

The Fourth Wall

The Fourth Wall is the monthly student newspaper for the Mont Alto campus of The Pennsylvania State University. Letters to the Editor, comments, and queries may be sent by e-mail to editor-in-chief John Shaffer at jbs5340@psu.edu. Mail can be sent to The Fourth Wall, Campus Life Office, 1 Campus Dr., Pennsylvania State University Mont Alto, Mont Alto PA 17237.

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Miss Lion

Dear Miss Lion,

I am a commuter and I have a class that ends at two thirty, but my next class does not start until five. I do not want to go back home, but when I do not have homework to do I get really bored. What do I do with all that time? Can you tell me some things that I can do to occupy my time?

-Bored Out Of My Mind

Dear Bored Out Of My Mind,

There are many things to do between classes. One thing you could do is rent a movie from the library, you can even sign out your own private study room The Wiestling Student Center (WSC) offers a pool room and music room.. You could head over to the Multipurpose Activities Center .or MAC. to get some exercise The MAC offers a gym where you can play some basketball or volleyball, a weight room that offers dumb bells and exercise equipment, and a cardio room with other types of exercise equipment. If you just want to surf the internet there are many computer labs available around campus including one in the Academic Support Center, one below the bookstore, and two computers in the WSC. If you are just looking for another place to hang out there is Café Java, the commuter lounge that is located in the basement of the General Studies Building, and the adult lounge that is located on the second floor of the Science and Technology Building on the side facing Wiestling. I hope this helps and gives you some ideas of what you can do during the time that you have between classes.

Love and Paws,

Miss Lion