



NEWS RELEASE – March 5, 2020

## **SME MN Conference is Designed for the Iron Ore Industry** *#1 Minerals Conference in the Midwest*

The SME Minnesota Conference is the only conference with a focus on the developments, technology, trends and innovations directly affecting the Midwest minerals market. The annual conference will be held at the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center, April 6-8, 2020. Featuring a wide variety of technical sessions and speakers combined with an expansive exhibit hall, the SME Minnesota Conference attracts hundreds of iron ore and mining industry professionals.

This annual conference features a progressive program examining the impact of technological advancements in the industry and the modernization of the region. The SME Minnesota Conference Program Coordinators are pleased to announce plenary speakers who are experts in their fields with a focus on industry developments, trends and innovations specific to the Midwest.

### **Opening Plenary Speakers:**

**Stacey Koon**, General Manager – Administration, Freeport-McMoRan Morenci Operations

**Lia Walker**, Manager – Innovation, Operational Improvement, Freeport-McMoRan

*Leveraging Artificial Intelligence to Unlock People Power*

*Tuesday, April 7, 2020 / 8:30 am – 9:30 am*

Stacey Koon is General Manager, Administration for Freeport-McMoRan Morenci Operations located in southeast Arizona. Stacey oversees the company town site and support functions for Freeport's largest operation in North America located in Morenci, Arizona. Stacey is on assignment supporting the Americas' Concentrator project, which has the potential to deliver 200mm pounds of additional copper throughput to the market from enhancements related to technology initiatives.

Lia Walker is the Manager of Innovation for Freeport-McMoRan Inc., a premier international mining company with headquarters in Phoenix, Arizona. She is the business leader for integrating data driven innovation and technology transformation into Freeport-McMoRan Inc. Under her leadership, highly engaged business teams leverage agile and change-management techniques to deploy technology and data science solutions that amplify business growth and profitability.

### **Closing Plenary Speaker:**

**Dr. Erika Garms**, CEO, WorkingSmarts, Inc.

*Building Brain-Friendly Workplaces*

*Wednesday, April 8, 2020 / 10:45 am – 11:30 am*

Dr. Garms helps leaders and teams work, manage and innovate smarter. She translates powerful scientific theory to everyday workplace practice to shape healthier and higher-performing organizations. Erika is the author of "The Brain-Friendly Workplace: Five Big Ideas from Neuroscience That Address Organizational Challenges". She speaks regularly at conferences, company meetings, and management retreats and is a professional member of the National Speakers Association and past Dean of the NSA Speakers Academy.

For more information on the SME Minnesota Conference, visit [www.smemnconference.com/](http://www.smemnconference.com/).

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SME is a professional society (nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation) whose members represent all professions serving the mining, minerals and underground construction industries in more than 100 countries. SME members include engineers, geologists, metallurgists, educators, students and researchers. SME advances the worldwide minerals community through information exchange and professional development.

For more information on SME, contact Jackie Dorr, Communications Manager, [dorr@smenet.org](mailto:dorr@smenet.org).