

The Market Herald

## **ioneer (ASX:INR) considers autonomous hauling at Rhyolite Ridge**

Elise Kelly

16 February 2021 13:20

- Lithium-boron supplier ioneer (INR) has completed an automation study with mining equipment companies Caterpillar and Cashman Equipment
- The feasibility study assessed the benefits of using an autonomous hauling system at ioneer's Rhyolite Ridge lithium-boron project in Nevada
- ioneer and Caterpillar have signed a memorandum of understanding to use Cat Command for hauling at the Rhyolite Ridge Project
- The companies are conducting preliminary non-binding negotiations regarding the proposed transaction, in hopes of finalising formal agreements in coming months
- ioneer is up 3.23 per cent and trading at 48 cents per share

Lithium-boron supplier ioneer (INR) has completed an automation study with mining equipment companies Caterpillar and Cashman Equipment.

Caterpillar is the largest manufacturer of construction and mining equipment in the world, while Cashman Equipment is the Cat dealer for the state of Nevada.

The study was a joint autonomous haul truck feasibility study, which assessed the benefits of using an autonomous hauling system (AHS) at ioneer's Rhyolite Ridge Project. The company's lithium-boron project is located in Nevada's Esmerelda County.

ioneer was reportedly pleased with the results from the feasibility study, which show that use of an AHS at the Rhyolite Ridge mine is viable and would positively impact the operations' overall cost structure.

ioneer and Caterpillar have signed a memorandum of understanding to use Cat 785 Next Generation mining trucks, equipped with Cat Command, for hauling at Rhyolite Ridge.

The companies are currently conducting preliminary non-binding negotiations regarding the terms of the proposed transaction. They hope to negotiate formal agreements in the months to come.

ioneer's Managing Director, Bernard Rowe, said the company looks forward to working with Caterpillar, Cashman, and Intermountain Mining Technology to produce materials for a sustainable future.

"Our agreement with Caterpillar represents much more than just the purchase of equipment; it is a true ongoing partnership as we commence production at Rhyolite Ridge," he said.

"The incorporation of an autonomous haulage system and other Caterpillar technologies at Rhyolite Ridge will only further our goal to improve project safety and operational efficiency," he added.

ioneer is up 3.23 per cent, trading at 48 cents per share at 11:39 am AEDT.