

### Drilling to Resume at Elk Creek

(KTNC) - Drilling is set to resume in southeast Nebraska this week as a Canadian mining firm looks for more evidence of a sizable deposit of a valuable and rare heat-resistant element used in steel.

NioCorp Developments said Tuesday it has hired West-Core Drilling of Elko, Nevada, to collect more core samples from the niobium deposit near Elk Creek.

This summer's drilling will be the first at the site since 2011. The company is trying to determine whether it would be profitable to build a mine to harvest the niobium from several hundred feet underground.

The Lincoln Journal-Star reports that the first phase will consist of approximately 4,200 feet of core drilling. The company says they will drill in three phases, totaling up to 12,000 meters if necessary.

The U.S. currently imports nearly all the niobium that's used in this country to harden steel and make it more heat-resistant for industrial uses.

NioCorp says the Elk Creek deposit is the highest grade undeveloped niobium deposit in North America. If estimates are correct, there could be as much as 100 tons of niobium at the Elk Creek site worth nearly \$27 billion.

The company hopes to start mining at the site by early 2016.