



## **An Introduction to the Mining and You Forum**

by David F. Briggs

I'm sure everyone has heard the phrase; "If it can't be grown it must be mined." Mining is one of the basic industries which form the foundation of modern society. Without the products of mining, modern society as you know it would not exist. All other industries are dependent on the products produced from mining. Just think about it for a minute. Even the food we consume requires products made from minerals to plant, fertilize, harvest and distribute it to the consumer.

Although mineral products have been used throughout the course of human history, modern society is more dependent on the products produced by the mining industry than it has ever been at anytime during recorded history. Whether it's coal, copper, zinc, gold, gypsum, limestone or sand and gravel; every man, woman and child in America consumes more than 38,000 pounds of newly mined mineral products every year. And despite extensive exploration, development and production of our domestic mineral resources, more than 99% of the land in the United States remains untouched by a miner's shovel.

Known as the "Copper State", Arizona has had a long history of fortunes won and lost at the numerous mining camps that dot its landscape. Ranked as the nation's second largest producer of non-fuel minerals, Arizona continues to contribute its mineral wealth, yielding mineral products valued at \$8.05 billion that represented approximately 10.5% of America's total mineral production during 2012. Principal commodities produced by Arizona's non-fuel mining industry in order of value include: copper, molybdenum concentrates, sand and gravel (construction), silver and Portland cement.

Have you ever wondered where and how mineral deposits were formed? Or why are they located in some geographic regions and not found elsewhere? Mineral deposits are formed and continue to be formed in many different environmental settings, including deep ocean basins, carbonate reefs, swamps, rivers and streams, playas and volcanoes and their underlying magma chambers. And many

of these ancient geological environments are preserved within the rocks throughout Arizona and the world.

Over the coming months, the “Mining and You” forum will discuss a wide variety of local and national issues related to mining and the role mining has played and continues to play in history. Other topics will include how science, technology and innovative mining practices are used to find and responsibly develop the mineral resources, which present and future generations of Americans will require to maintain their economic and national security. I invite everyone to join and participate in these discussions.

Disclaimer: David F. Briggs is a resident of Pima county and a geologist, who has worked in the mining industry for more than 35 years.

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