



Responsibility - Our Actions Impact Others

by David F. Briggs

The other day I was looking through an advertisement from a local outdoor sporting goods retailer, who was gearing up for the Christmas holiday season on which so many merchants depend. I was surprised to see a full page announcement about the donations they made in support of Save the Scenic Santa Ritas' efforts to halt the development of all new mining projects in southeastern Arizona. Skimming back through their holiday gift guide, I counted the numerous products that contained raw materials derived from mining and thought; "this business makes a profit from selling consumer goods that are made from products derived from mining, but publicly opposes the responsible development of new mining projects in southeastern Arizona."



Panorama of the Proposed Site of the Rosemont Copper Project in the Santa Rita Mountains, Pima County, Arizona (Photo taken by David Briggs, August 2008)

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 our homes where we live, public utilities that supply us power and water or jobs that enable us to provide for our families, they all use products derived from mining. Even the food we consume requires minerals that farmers use to fertilize their fields. Then there are the metals contained in the equipment used to cultivate and harvest their crops and trucks used to transport them to the marketplace. Products derived from mining are all around us. They are an integral part of our existence.

All human activity has an impact on our environment. Mining is not unique in this respect. By its very nature mining activities create substantial impacts, which cannot be completely eliminated. However, there are ways to minimize these impacts through the use of sound engineering, environmental and reclamation practices.

I understand everyone's desire to preserve our environment and the natural beauty of Arizona's wide open spaces. It's only natural to oppose things that will impact our community. However, halting the development of new mining projects in southeastern Arizona will not reduce the impacts that mining has on the environment. And shifting the burden of mining's impacts to others is not the right solution for this problem either.

As long as we remain dependent on the products derived from mining, wouldn't it be more responsible to work with the mining industry to find better ways to minimize the impacts it has on our community?

Disclaimer: David F. Briggs is a resident of Pima county and a geologist, who has intermittently worked on the Rosemont Copper project since 2006. The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of Rosemont Copper.

Copyright (2013) by David F. Briggs. Reprint is permitted only if the credit of authorship is provided and linked back to the source.

Originally published by Mining and You in the Tucson Citizen on November 29, 2013.