

# MINE III

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

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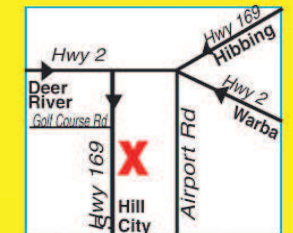
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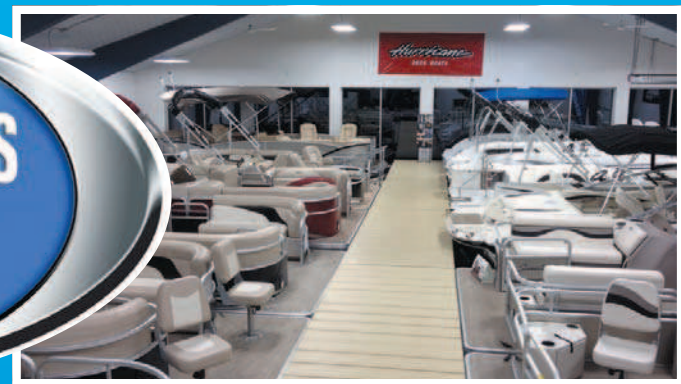
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# MINE III

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2014 • PAGE 3



Aaron Gornick poses outside a drill at the Northshore Mine in Babbitt.

MARK SAUER/MESABI DAILY NEWS

## ‘YA JUST SMILE THROUGH IT’

### On the job in bitter cold weather

**KELLY GRINSTEINER**  
HIBBING DAILY TRIBUNE

The temperature is far below zero. The wind is fast, fierce. It rips over the piles, around the machinery, whistling as it whizzes through crevasses.

The rock is extra solid, the steel is brittle.

Just the thought of the arctic temps and wicked wind sends a bitter chill down the spine.

Aaron Gornick can't pick the weather conditions on the days and nights he spends working in the pit at Northshore in Babbitt.

The equipment operator doesn't choose his job each shift either.

Gornick could be running a truck or a loader, which means hours in a cab, or be put on a cable truck or drill, which means hours in the paralyzing elements.

What he can pick is how to properly dress for the assignment.

"We work outside in all weather," said Gornick, who's been at Northshore for six years. "For us operators, you can be in or out. There are jobs where we are more exposed to outside weather, and other jobs where we're in a cab all day. We never know which until we get our assignments, and then you dress appropriately."

And when the temps are in the negatives — which has often been the case in these past couple winter months — that means wearing a lot of layers.

"You go put on as many layers as you can, and your traction devices so you don't slip," said Gornick, noting he typically dons three to four layers. "You make sure you have everything you need to be outside all day."

Layers to protect him from the polar

conditions could include thermal wear, long sleeves, flannel and company-provided jackets, among other options. They also commonly wear face masks, helmet liners of various styles including some that wrap around the chin, and spiked overshoes fitted with insulation.

"The jackets are pretty nice and warm," said Gornick. "Oh, and make sure you have a hat and something to cover you neck and face as much as you can because it's always windy out there. Wind is a big, big factor out there."

Frigid temps, snow, ice, rain — and wind.

"It's everywhere out there. The wind is the worst," he added. "It bites you the worst."

Jamey Sundberg, a maintenance technician, concurred. An 11-year employee at Northshore, this "bull

gang" member spent four years in mine operations before bidding into his current maintenance role.

Sundberg focuses on shovel and drill maintenance, or as Gornick quipped, "I break it, he fixes it."

Being on a drill pattern is by far the worst, when it comes to working in the intense cold and extra-crisp wind.

"You are up above, and it's always blowing there," said Sundberg. "It's so wide open."

Sundberg checks the day's weather conditions at home before heading in for his shift.

"And then I drag my feet a bit," he jived.

But would he prefer just the opposite — a swelter hot, humid, sunny summer day?

"I just like being outside," said Sundberg. "Although that does sound

SEE COLD, PAGE 4

Cover by Marla Thompson • Pagination and Design by Debbie Conaway  
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MARK SAUER/MESABI DAILY NEWS

Thick ice covers the tracks of a drill at the mine in Babbitt.

## COLD

FROM PAGE 3

good right now."

Gornick didn't have a preference.

"Hot is not good either when it's really hot," he said. "So I just deal with it."

The biggest worry in the battle this winter has been frostbite.

"You have to try and cover up as much as you can. Do what you can not to expose yourself too long," said Gornick. "And if you need to warm up, find a place to go inside and warm up. Get out of the cold."

Sundberg concurred.

"You go out there and try to do what you can, even though covering your face makes your glasses fog up and you can't see," he said.

Those who work with their hands outside often times have to take off their gloves, but are quick to put them right back on. Sundberg said he sees welders with two pairs of gloves — one pair on their hands while the other pair is on the defroster, and then they switch them.

It's on the midnight shift, when temps dip to 40 and 50 below and the wind is constant, that elements are the most severe.

"There's not too much you can do about it, so you hurry up and get the job done," said Gornick.

Knowing how to dress and what the conditions are like is partially trial and error, they said. They also get advice from those who went before them, both mine vets and the person they are relieving.

"I usually talk to the guy on the previous shift," said Gornick. "He will tell you if it's nasty out, how to dress."

Halting operations due to extremely cold conditions is not an option, according to Conor McCue, area manager of mine. The one condition that would cause that is lighting.

"Keeping safe is up to the individual," said Sundberg. "If you are too cold, you gotta warm up. Have a truck sitting there or jump into a cab on a shovel. Go warm up."

Crew members also tend to look out for each other, according to Scott Olson, section manager of mine operations.

"During these cold conditions, we do watch out for each other," he said. "We have a great culture. We have a buddy system, like a family that looks out for each other."

There has not been



Aaron Gornick operates a drill.

any major cold-related health incidents at Northshore, said McCue. Skin irritations from safety glasses has been common though.

"When it's cold and the glasses rub against the skin, that's where we get a lot of the frostbite in mining," said McCue. "We watch out for that on a lot of these guys."

Incidents like this that are designated non-treatable but have the potential to require medical attention must be reported. McCue

said they want to know the condition and the circumstance in which it occurred so they have the ability to change it or prevent it from happening to the next person who finds themselves in a similar situation.

"We want to know about them," he said. "And sometimes if we don't have a good idea, we have our sister mines and safety managers there to converse with. We can say 'we had this happen, do you have any better ideas?'"

That kind of communication and resourcing led the company to determine the preferred traction boots for employees, according to McCue.

"We do have incidents, but they are not Northshore specific," he added. "We have an intelligent, knowledge base and talk with Utac and Hibtac too."

Weather conditions are sometimes taken into consideration when scheduling some jobs, such as maintenance

and inspections, said McCue. If necessary, they can adjust the types of jobs.

Keeping the machines running, especially the drills, when it's cold is better than shutting them down, said Rob Barkdoll, section manager of mine maintenance. It's more difficult to start them up cold rather than to keep them up and running.

"Some of the equipment moves slow and reacts differently with

SEE COLD, PAGE 5

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MARK SAUER/MESABI DAILY NEWS

Rock dust fills the sub-zero air around a drill unit at the Northshore Mine in Babbitt.

# COLD

FROM PAGE 4

the cold," said Gornick. "You have to be careful with the loader ... steel is very brittle in the cold."

Human efficiency also decreases in the cold.

"With all the clothes you have on, it's hard to move at times," said Sundberg. "You know you can't move

around so easily or do things as quickly."

But they don't worry much if production slightly weans for a short time. McCue said they always have inventories above their targets to ensure they have what's needed to get through cold winter days and other weather delays.

The cold doesn't have much affect on the ore itself. Where its does is in the transfer points following crushing,

said McCue. The water created during that process gets into transfer points, such as loading in to the bins in the train.

"That's where we see the biggest problems," he added.

While working in the gelid pit isn't always fun, it isn't causing these two to seek employment look elsewhere.

"I love my job," said Sundberg, but noted that he's urging his children to pursue four-year degrees. "I work with

a great bunch of guys, we get along really well and I like coming here."

Gornick doesn't mind his duties either.

"It's a good environment," he added.

But how does he survive those finger-freezing, bone-chill days?

"Ya just smile through it," he said.

And while all the attention is on the cold, Olson pointed out that there are

SEE COLD, PAGE 6



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MARK SAUER/MESABI DAILY NEWS

St. Louis County Commissioner Keith Nelson speaks at the grand opening of the women's wing of Merritt House last August.

**GUEST COLUMN**

**KEITH NELSON**

St. Louis County Commissioner

**'Opposed' to mining? You've got to be kidding.**

Have we forgotten our heritage? Twenty-six months ago at a St. Louis County Board meeting this question came to mind while listening with some concern as one of my fellow commissioners from downtown Duluth stated that he was "fundamentally opposed" to mining. Could someone be fundamentally opposed to our history, opposed to advancements in civilization gained by our ancestors' ability to mine and forge metals into tools, weapons, and materials to build our homes and communities? Have we forgotten that logging, farming, and mining helped forge a region of our forefathers' pride here in Northeastern Minnesota? Have we become so far removed from where our food, our energy, our clothing come from? Have our lives gotten so cushy that we no longer consider what it takes in raw materials for our basic everyday need? Is this new America, now two generations removed from their rural roots, no longer interested in the toils of our past or have we simply failed to educate our children and grandchildren of our history's importance to

their futures? In recent months, I have attended numerous meetings where individuals talk of the pristine wilderness that is Northeastern Minnesota. They speak of water flows, with no mention of the 107 mostly WPA-era dams that helped create their wilderness experience. They speak of pristine Birch Lake, with no mention that this reservoir was created to, and has been, producing hydroelectric power (a renewable energy) since 1922. No one talks of the Fall Lake dam, which was rebuilt by the Forest Service to make it look more natural. Indeed, no one talks of the 16 resorts on Basswood Lake that were closed to create wilderness. Instead, we are instructed to rely on tourism as if it did not exist prior to the set aside of more than 2 million acres in the late 1960s or would not exist today without those set asides. We are further instructed to rely on tourism jobs, which are seasonal, weather dependent, and to a large degree are not the types of jobs on which once can live and raise a family. Have we forgotten the pine forests

of Northeastern Minnesota built the cities of the eastern United States? The second leg of our economic three-legged stool, which is logging, has been forever impacted by first the setting aside of 360,000 acres with the Wilderness Act of 1964, then one year later Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman's actions made an additional 667,000 acres forever off-limits to logging. By the late 1960s, the aforementioned 2 million acres were set aside under federal ownership either as national parks or wilderness area. Today all forestry management within many miles of those set-aside areas is scrutinized by every environmental group as if the wilderness has no boundaries. Our logging community and industries which depend on their raw materials are instructed to diversify. Today that industry survives, not thrives, under oppressive quotas and regulations, which are driving the industry north to Canada where we can watch carload after carload of wood products railed through Northeastern Minnesota to southern markets daily. Today the third leg of Northeastern Minnesota's economic stool is under

attack as we again try to diversify our economic base while protecting the environment that we and much of our state continue to enjoy. We, the people, of Northeastern Minnesota are not children who need instruction on what is best for our communities. We have had plenty of that in this region's history, at every juncture, to our economic detriment. As the experts of this nation, once again, converge to tell our region what is in our best interest I need to ask if precious metal mining is not ready as some say, then when? If not in a state with the toughest environmental laws in the nation, then where? If not by people who have carved hard rock from the earth for more than 100 years, in a region which produced more than 3 billion tons of iron ore alone, then by whom? The science is in place, the commitment of investors and industry is there, the need is well-documented. It is now time for the political courage to be there as well.   
Keith Nelson of Foyal Township is the 6th District St. Louis County commissioner.

**COLD**

FROM PAGE 5

always weather conditions the miners have to adjust to. "Now, the season will soon change, and that thaw and freeze event will create a whole other gamut of hazards and conditions for them to work in," he said. "They will have to change their focus and deal with it over the next few months. We face this year in and year out. Just because the weather gets warmer doesn't mean the job gets easier. It's a transition." Other hazards include dust, sun exposure and dehydration, to name a few. "Each season there's a hazard to be aware of," said McCue. "And some hazards are all year round. Most of them are, and they have to be aware of them." Gornick admits this winter has been tough, definitely the worst in recent years. "In the past it hasn't been this cold for this long," he said. "It seems like we fight it every day instead of maybe every couple of days or so. It's like we never get a break from it. It's like normal now." That's true, said Sundberg. "It's almost to the point when it's 10 below and you think, 'this doesn't feel too bad,'" he added.



Jamey Sundberg uses a sledge hammer to knock into place a frozen coupling ring in a drill at Northshore in Babbitt.

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# ‘Workers comp injuries come through the door’

# PREVENTIVE CARE

## On the job, in everyday life

**ANGIE RIEBE**  
MESABI DAILY NEWS

VIRGINIA — It could be from lifting a turkey out of the oven. It could be from moving a heavy core drilling rod.

Injuries incurred from lifting, pushing, pulling and carrying objects of all sizes and weights come with costs. They are painful for the individuals suffering them; financially painful to companies when the trauma occurs on the work site.

Dr. L.A. “Bucky” Phelps sees it all the time in his Iron Range chiropractic practice.

“Workers’ comp injuries come through the door” consistently at the Phelps Chiropractic offices in Virginia and Ely, he said.

The number one cause of workplace injury, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, is from overextension related to lifting, pushing, pulling, holding, carrying or throwing. Back pain is the top reason employees file

SEE INJURIES, PAGE 8



Dr. L.A. “Bucky” Phelps of Phelps Chiropractic in Virginia and Ely demonstrates the PowerLift program he is offering to help improve worker safety at local industries and mines. MARK SAUER/MESABI DAILY NEWS

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SUBMITTED

Dr. L.A. "Bucky" Phelps of Phelps Chiropractic in Virginia and Ely presents a PowerLift training session to employees at Twin Metals in Ely.

## INJURIES

FROM PAGE 7

workers' compensation claims, costing American businesses billions of dollars in direct costs annually.

And the effects of those injuries for workers can be debilitating and long-lasting — well into retirement.

The thing is, much of the damage can be easily prevented, Phelps said.

While people may think they know how to lift and maneuver objects — some may even provide quizzical looks when told they are going to be taught the proper way — there are more updated techniques.

The "old way" of safe material handling — the traditional "back school" method of teaching — is now outdated, Phelps said.

It has been replaced with the more effective patented PowerLift® system — a so-to-speak "new school" method of ergonomic and manual material-handling techniques for workers developed by a 36-year-experienced chiropractic orthopedist, Dr. Michael Schaefer.

His PowerLift program has been taught to workers throughout the United States, Canada, Europe and Asia in industries ranging from agriculture, fire and rescue, and home health care to construction, grocery, and hospitality. Clients include 3M, Pfizer, SuperValu, and the United States Postal Service.

The system is now being introduced to the Iron Range.

Phelps was certified in PowerLift two years ago and began local training sessions last spring.

His 25-year practice has always promoted prevention, and the training seemed a "great fit for the region" — particularly with the amount of lifting involved in jobs employed by workers at mining companies and their industry vendors, said Phelps, who gave a PowerLift demonstration last fall for the Iron Mining Association.

"Safety is a key goal for every company in the iron mining industry, said IMA President Craig Pagel. "Mines and the companies supplying services and products to the mines all want their employees to return home safely to their families every day."

The IMA Safety and Health Committee was formed to educate the mines and vendors on proactive safety programs, he said. Its mission is to promote the continuous improvement of safety in mines and plants for all employees, contractors, visitors, guests, and other stakeholders by: Sharing best safety practices; opening and improving communication between industry, labor, and government; assuring consistent interpretation of standards and regulations; and acquiring/advancing safety-based knowledge and new skill sets.

PowerLift's skills are taught in three phases.

Phase 1 involves classroom training. Employees spend two to three hours comparing their old way of material handling with the PowerLift system and learning the new techniques.

Phase 2 takes those skills to the production floor for another two to three hours of hands-on, on-the-job practice, Phelps said.

Phase 3 is ongoing training, which companies can incorporate according to their own needs, as frequently as

they determine, and they can be held "on their own" or with the assistance of a trainer such as Phelps.

Additionally, he offers 20- to 30-minute demonstrations to safety coordinators who would like a preview of what to expect during a training session.

According to PowerLift materials, its techniques "debunk the myth of the squat lift." It teaches a more effective lifting practice using a wider stance, Phelps said. Essentially, it's about "lifting with the legs like an elevator rather than with the back like a crane," he said.

"With back pain being the number one reason employees file workers' compensation claims, effective manual material handling training can save businesses money, especially when considering that over half of back injuries result from improper lifting," according to PowerLift.

If just one employee at each company is saved from an injury that would require workers' comp and lost time, then the training "more than pays for itself," said Phelps, whose initial clients have been IDEA Drilling in Virginia, and Twin Metals in Ely.

Workers at those companies frequently lift heavy equipment, including core drilling rods and bags of concrete, he said.

The feedback has been "excellent," said the chiropractor. Employees "found the materials useful."

IDEA Drilling is continually looking for ways to improve the welfare of its workers, said Max Motley, health and safety manager. During Phelps' training session there, "he brought in his own props" and taught "the proper lift" using each one, Motley said.

But the information provided went beyond the workplace, Motley said. "He did a lot of practical stuff — home safety as well," including such things as how to safely pick up a baby and how to put a child in and out of a car seat.

PowerLift teaches skills with endless practical uses, Phelps added, such as how to remove the Thanksgiving turkey from the oven — something that many people do in a way that can be physically damaging.

Motley said IDEA plans to use Phelps' training "from time to time" and when there are new hires. In the future, the company may have him job shadow employees to offer pointers, he said.

Phelps said he is sometimes met at the training sessions by young employees who question why the information is necessary. Older employees, however, say such things as, "I wish I'd learned that 30 years ago." The less-experienced workers then take note, and "the light bulb goes off," he said.

Phelps offers the wisdom that it's never too early to prevent back injuries "if you want to play golf," lift the grandkids — or do anything, really, that is active in retirement.

PowerLift instructs "the mechanics of how to do it right," said Phelps, who welcomes employers in all fields and industries to contact him if there is an interest in training. "Prevention goes a long way."

Phelps can be contacted at 218-741-4044. More information on PowerLift can be found at: [www.powerlift-training.com](http://www.powerlift-training.com).

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# Mining Motivations

## Next generation of miners looks to future in industry

**BRIAN AROLA**  
HIBBING DAILY TRIBUNE

HIBBING — Through the economic ups and down, the mining industry has continually drew young people to pursue work related to the field.

For some, the allure of a high-wage job is the selling point. Others see new mines opening up and old miners prepping for retirement as signs that jobs will be available.

Some knew from a very young age that they wanted to become a miner, others took longer.

The motivations fueling the next generation of miners in Northern Minnesota can be vastly different, but they all share the motivation and end goal to find work in the industry.

Dan Buria, a second-year student at Hibbing Community College (HCC), knew fairly early on that he wanted to work in the mines. He got a first-hand look at the industry as part of his high school job at Minnesota Industries in Chisholm, and said the variety of work done

SEE FUTURE, PAGE 10



Hundreds of job seekers attended the annual Mining Industry Day at the Minnesota Discovery Center in Chisholm. The event gave mining-related employers a chance to interact directly with the area's workforce.

MARK SAUER/MESABI DAILY NEWS



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Dan Buria hones his diesel mechanic skills during a class at Hibbing Community College.



Hibbing Community College students practice skills that land them work at the mines.

## FUTURE

FROM PAGE 9

at mines drew him in pretty early on.

"I've always liked working with my hands," he said. "So the mining environment just seemed right."

Hands-on work is a driving factor for many others looking for mining jobs in the future too.

Nick Perrington has been working construction since he graduated high school last year. He said he doesn't plan to go to college, but would like to use his experience running equipment at the mines.

"I grew up in a logging family, so I ran equipment my whole life," he said. "That's what I do, and that's what I love."

The proximity of mines was also a major selling point for Perrington, whose construction jobs sent him to North Dakota and Iowa for months at a time.

"I'd rather be an hour away from home than 10 hours away from home," he said.

Dave Wherland, in his first year at HCC, said he realized after graduating high school that he loved the area and the outdoor activities available, so the mining industry seemed like the logical choice.

"At first I didn't want to, but then I realized how more and more I wanted to stay up here, because I just like the environment like woods and going fishing and hunting," he said.

The chance to stay close to home is an enticing prospect for many young people looking at the mining industry, said Rick Mayerich, industrial systems technology instructor at HCC.

"There's a reason why the kids are here, because they want to stay here," he said, adding that the vast majority of his students are from the area.

Other students are drawn by the money signs, as there's no in-



Nick Perrington meets employers during Minnesota WorkForce Center's Mining Industry Day held in January at Minnesota Discovery Center.

dustry that pays as well as mining in the area, he said.

Jacob Coyle, another student at HCC, said the chance for high-paying work led him to come to the Iron Range from Duluth.

Of course, the pay wouldn't matter if no mines were hiring. The possibility for openings in the near future was something the aspiring miners said they at least had in the back of their minds.

"It's booming right now," Coyle said. "There's a lot of job openings and many mines on the Range."

The oft-discussed PolyMet Mining project north of Hoyt Lakes was one example Coyle pointed toward for future openings.

"If that opens up, there's going to be so many job openings," he said.

He wasn't alone in his support for the project among his classmates.

You'd be hard pressed to find a PolyMet critic among the students at

HCC. For them, the project means possible future employment.

Mayerich said along with mine openings, students should be encouraged about their job prospects because mining industry projections show a slew of retirements coming in the next few years. Some expectations should be tempered, however, because the retirings will likely be gradual, he said. It's unlikely the hirings to replace those positions will resemble the mass hirings seen in the mid-1970s, he said.

"I don't see it as a mass thing," Mayerich said. "They have to be replaced, of course, but they're not going to be retiring in droves."

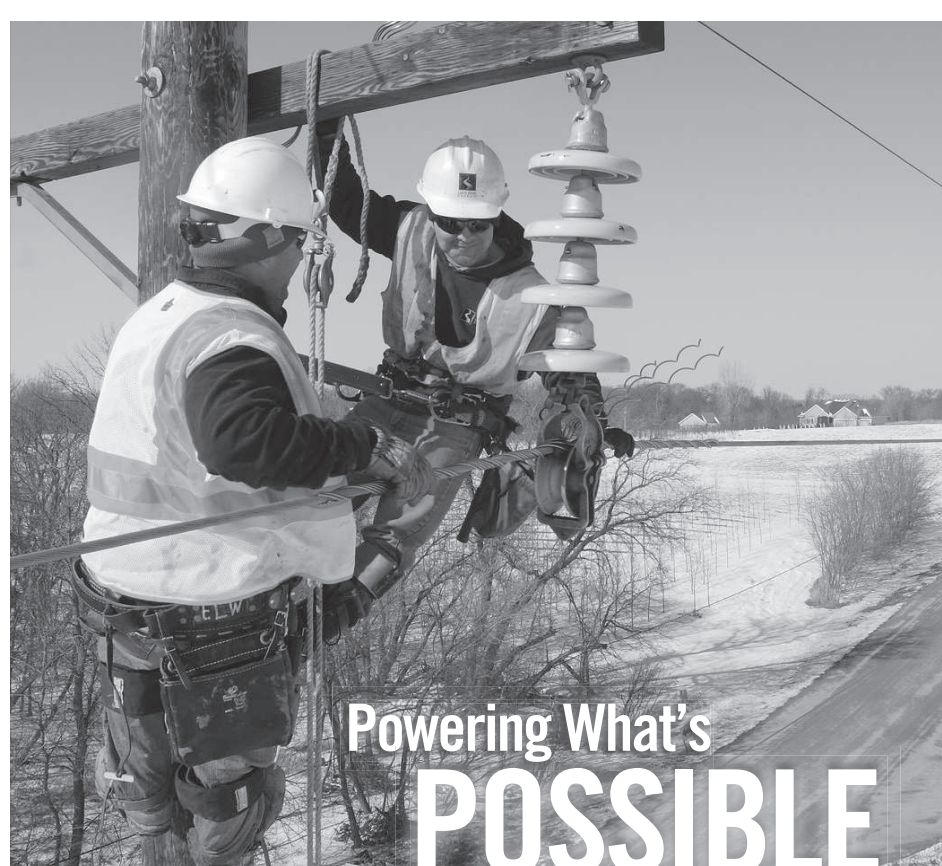
With the gradual future openings in mind, Wherland and Perrington both attended the Minnesota WorkForce Center's Mining Industry Day in late January to get their names out to employers.

The event drew about 800 like-minded people

SEE FUTURE, PAGE 11



Dan Buria is currently in the hiring process for the Minorca Mine.



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# FUTURE

FROM PAGE 10

of all ages, and featured almost all the major mining companies in the area as well as numerous mining-related businesses.

Wherland said the event left him encouraged about his future, while Perrington said he got a lot of positive feedback from companies he was interested in. Both said they know they'll have to show work ethic to get the job they desire.

Hard work is among the first things mining representatives will tell students they look for in a job candidate, Mayerich said.

"Some have it and some don't, and I try to work it into them one way or another," he said.

For Buria, in his last semester at HCC, the hard work looks to have paid off. He's currently in the hiring process with ArcelorMittal Minorca Mine.

If hired as a diesel mechanic, he'd leave college for the mines in what would basically be a work study agreement between HCC and Minorca.

After some discouragement from not hearing back from employers, Buria said he was thrilled to finally get his chance.

If the hiring is completed, Buria would be the newest member of the next generation of miners on the Iron Range. Looking forward, he said he knows he'd like to stick with the mine that hires him



Industrial Lubricants representatives Brad Bjorklund, Pete Wohlers and Duane Pederson talk about their business.

MARK SAUER/MESABI DAILY NEWS

for years to come, but the versatility of roles that drew him into the industry in the first place is something that he'll hope for in his career.

"It just depends on how things go," he said. "At least you have the option in the mines where you might start turning wrenches and move elsewhere after a while."

**Aspiring miners talk to employers about job prospects during Mining Industry Day held in January.**

BRIAN AROLA/  
HIBBING DAILY TRIBUNE



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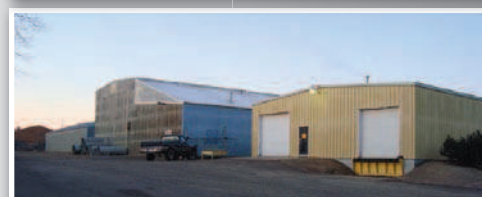
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**GUEST COLUMN**

**CARLY MELIN**  
6A DFL Representative



MARK SAUER/MESABI DAILY NEWS

Rep. Carly Melin, DFL-Hibbing, responds to a question during an interview at the Mesabi Daily News. Melin said people should understand the positive impact of mining on education.

# Mining dollars go to education

## We need to remember how important is our No. 1 industry

We are proud of our schools here in Minnesota. Sometimes, though, we tend to forget how important the health of the mining industry is to our educational opportunities on the Iron Range. Many people look to beautiful schools — like Hibbing High School — and quip, “That’s what the mining industry used to pay for.” What many do not realize, however, is that millions of dollars of taconite production tax revenue are dedicated to our 15 K-12 schools districts across the Iron Range region every year.

This taconite production tax is levied on the mining industry in lieu of local property taxes and is dedicated by formula to local communities, school districts, counties, and economic development while providing property tax relief for homeowners and businesses.

Currently, schools in northeast Minnesota receive 44.45 cents per ton dedicated to education, which means that in 2013, \$12,436,742 from mining taxes went to help our kids receive a great education.

Additionally, mining companies pay royalties to the state for state-owned taconite reserves. These royalties are paid into either the Permanent School Fund for school districts across the state or the Permanent University Fund for scholarships for students at the University of Minnesota, endowed University Chairs, engineering degrees on the Iron Range, and to support minerals research conducted by the Natural Resources Research Institute. Minnesota’s K-12 schools statewide annually receive more than \$40 million from the School Fund and the University Fund has almost \$400 million in trust.

Last year, the Iron Range Legislative Delegation recommended, and the Legislature approved, an increase to the taconite production tax dedicated to capital investment projects for our local schools. Thirty-eight million dollars of new school investments will take place, including technology

upgrades, energy efficiency projects, classroom renovations to maximize learning space, and asset preservation.

In addition to our K-12 schools, mining also plays an integral role in our region through the colleges of the Northeast Higher Education District (NHED): Itasca Community College, Hibbing Community College, Mesabi Range Community & Technical College, Rainy River Community College, and Vermilion Community College.

To ensure a skilled workforce for our future, IRRRB, in partnership with the (NHED) and Minnesota State University-Mankato, developed the Iron Range Engineering (IRE) program. Students in the IRE program are able to complete their first two years of courses through Itasca Community College and their second two years at Mesabi Range College through Minnesota State University-Mankato, where they then graduate with a bachelor’s degrees in engineering.

Students thus far have more than 95 percent job or graduate school placement upon graduation, most of them being hired right here on the range. The taconite production tax was instrumental in creating this program, which is now fully accredited and has earned a reputation nationally of developing a more dynamic engineer through project-based learning.

As we expand our mining industry through the development of copper/nickel/precious metals mining, investment in schools across the region will grow along with the jobs.

In a global economy, kids being educated here need a world class education to compete in today’s workforce. There is no doubt the mining industry is an essential piece of that aspiration here in northeast Minnesota.



Carly Melin is the House 6A DFL representative from Hibbing, who is an assistant majority leader in the Legislature.



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**“We Support Mining, Mining Supports 49ers”**



MARK SAUER/MESABI DAILY NEWS

The PolyMet copper/nickel/precious metals project received plenty of support at a public hearing in Duluth in January.

# PolyMet EIS hearings informative, passionate and even theatrical

## Zup's grocery bag, channeling Pete Seeger's spirit both used as props

**BILL HANNA**  
MESABI DAILY NEWS

It's a classic American confrontation — some are fighting for a cause — do no harm to the environment; others for their very way of life — create jobs with state and federal environmental standards met and exceeded.

The two sides verbally clashed at three public hearings on the proposed copper/nickel/precious metals PolyMet project's supplemental draft environmental impact statement in January — with the most compelling and spirited one in St. Paul on Jan. 28.

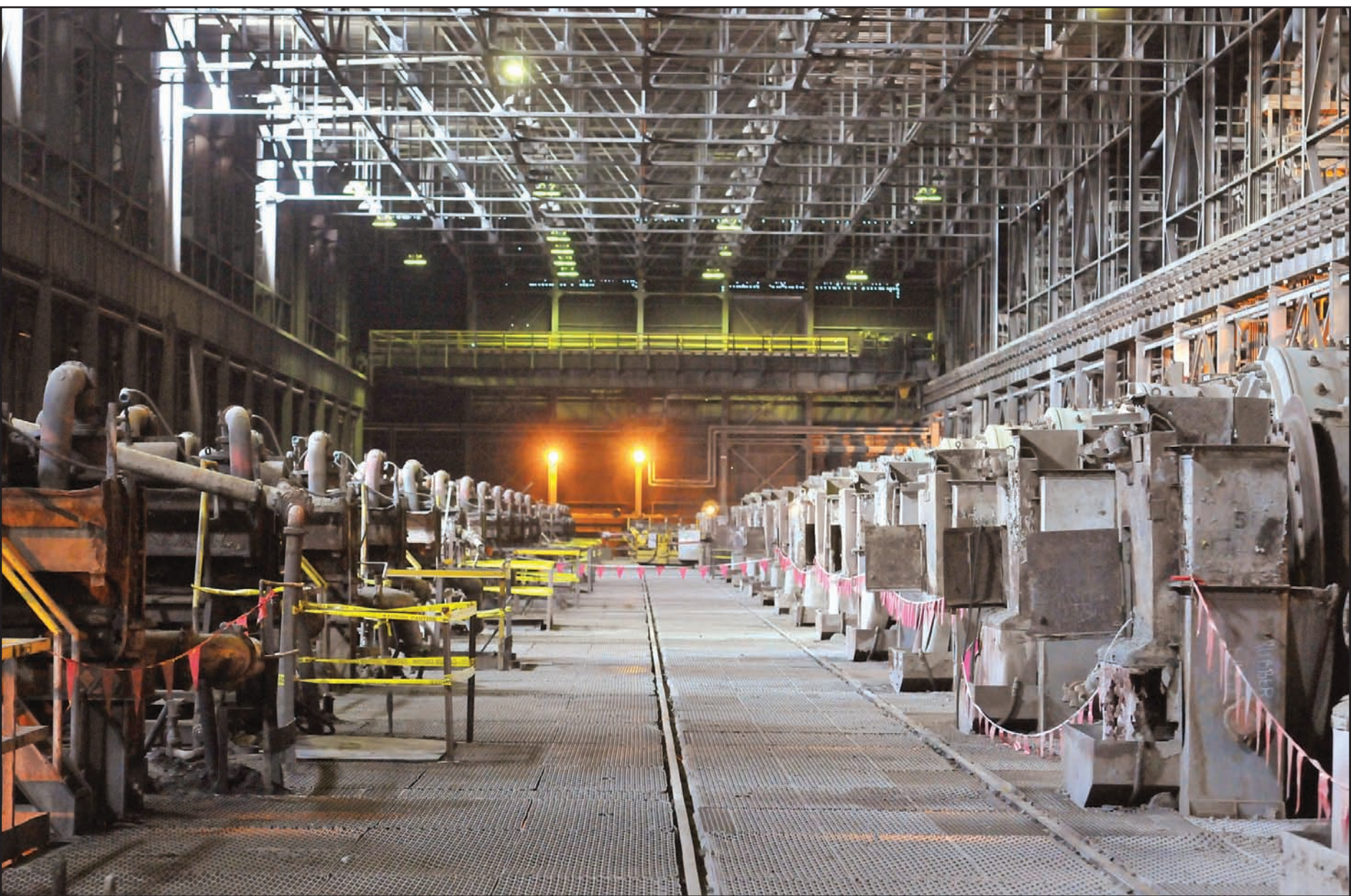
Former state Rep. Tom Rukavina of Virginia and Larry Long of Minneapolis represented the polar opposite passions of the two sides — and both used props.

Rukavina pulled out a large grocery bag from Zup's Food Market on the Range and asked those opposed to nonferrous mining to deposit their cell phones, iPads, car keys and any other items that depend on



A crowd of more than 700 people filled the Mesabi East High School gym for the second of three public hearings in Aurora for the PolyMet Mine's supplemental draft environmental impact statement.

SEE POLYMET, PAGE 14



Lines of equipment from the former LTV Mining site fill the crusher building at PolyMet.

MARK SAUER/MESABI DAILY NEWS

## POLYMET

FROM PAGE 13

the minerals PolyMet is seeking to extract from the ground and process at facilities near Hoyt Lakes and Babbitt.

“Everyone in this room uses the metals we’re talking about, so we’re all polluters. ... This project — think about it — is the biggest recycling project in the history of Minnesota.

“We’re not talking about pop cans and beer bottles on the curbs here, folks. We are talking about (reusing) crushers, concentrators, railroads, tailings ponds, haul roads — they’re all already there,” the always quick-to-quip in a to-the-point manner former lawmaker said, referencing recycling, which is dear to the hearts of preservationists.

Long, meanwhile, used a guitar and harmonica to accompany his anti-mining song, and tried to leverage the spirit of iconic folk/protest singer Pete Seeger who had just died, with lyrics that said those on the Range need to clean up their “mess.” But he had no mention of the highly successful Iron Range Resources &



More than 1,000 people filled the DECC in Duluth for the first of three public comment meetings on the PolyMet SDEIS.

Rehabilitation Board’s mineland reclamation effort or Magnetation’s flourishing business of reclaiming and processing taconite tailings from as far back as a century on the West Range for a useful and financially successful mining product of concentrate to be reused.

“Mineland reclama-

tion” and “Magnetation” must not have been able to be put to rhyme for his song, unlike “acid rock” that made the cut.

Rukavina had no takers in the crowd of more than 2,100 on his offer that carried a most accurate message of hypocrisy for the anti-copper/nickel/precious metals folks. But his

words, which received some boos from opponents, were backed with overwhelming and loud applause from supporters, including a large contingent of hard-working hard hats who build things for a living.

As for Long, it didn’t appear he inked a recording contract that evening for a CD titled

“Anti-Mining’s Greatest Hits.”

But both made their points, delivered with sincerity, flair and some entertainment value. And that provided some refreshing relief from a three-hour rehashing of talking points on both sides of the issue.

However, a final decision on a determination

of adequacy for the EIS will be made on science and study, not theatrics, DNR Commissioner Tom Landwehr has made clear.

“This is the year when things really start happening. This is not about support for the project or opposition to it, although those comments

SEE POLYMET, PAGE 15



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David Freeman of Ely expresses the reasons he isn't supporting the PolyMmet project during the public comment session in Duluth.



Former Ely mayor Roger Skraba talks about the need for a diversified economy and the area's long history with mining as reasons he supports the PolyMet project during the Duluth public hearing.

## POLYMET

FROM PAGE 14

are certainly welcome. This is about the EIS; the details of the EIS and what can be done to improve it," Landwehr said in a Mesabi Daily News story prior to the first hearing that was held in Duluth, with others that followed in Aurora and then St. Paul.

The DNR is one of three co-lead agencies on the project's EIS, along with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Forest Service.

The 2,200-page supplemental EIS, complete after about nine years of work by PolyMet that included a swing-and-miss on the first draft a couple years ago, was put out for public comment the first week of December for a 90-day period that will end on March 13. DNR officials have called it a good and detailed document.

The EIS is the gateway to the

final permitting process. If determined adequate, that would pave the way for a permitting process to get into full gear.

PolyMet CEO Jon Cherry said in a telephone interview last week that he is still "hopeful" construction on the processing facility, which is in the footprint of the former LTV Mining site near Hoyt Lakes, could begin by the end of this year or early 2015. An open pit mine would be operated near Babbitt.

The project would create 360 good-paying permanent jobs, hundreds more spin-off positions and about 2 million hours of construction work. In addition, it would provide an opportunity for new value-added businesses on the Range.

The company's investment in the project, which already exceeds \$150 million, will top off at \$650 million, Cherry said.

About 90 people gave three-minute comments at each hearing. And stenographers were on

hand to take down remarks of others. Written testimony was also submitted.

All comments — and Landwehr said there are more than 10,000 expected, which is how many were received in 2009 when the initial EIS was put out for review — will get a response. After that, a final determination of the EIS will be made.

"Every comment will be considered individually. Now, some will obviously be pretty much the same and so we will categorize those," Landwehr said in his interview with the MDN.

Cherry said he is pleased with how the process is progressing, including the public hearings.

"I was absolutely very impressed with both sides about their civil nature during the hearings and the respectful thoughts and opinions.

"The regulatory agencies and the facilitator did a great job in managing the hearings. Everyone

SEE POLYMET, PAGE 16



Folk singer Larry Long of Minneapolis uses his three minutes during the public comment portion of the PolyMet hearing in St. Paul to sing an anti-mining song he wrote.

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**POLYMET**

FROM PAGE 15

had an opportunity to make their views known," Cherry said.

The CEO praised the "excellent" showing at all hearings by organized labor.

"This will generate two million hours of construction activity, also while protecting the environment. They have a vested interest," he said.

Cherry said he is "very confident in the design. There was nothing in comments made during the hearings that was a surprise ... nothing that knocked us off track."

Thankful is the word to sum up the CEO's feelings about the public hearing process.

"Thanks for all the supporters. Thanks to those opposed to the project to take the time to share. The process is incredibly important. I'm humbled by the overwhelming support," Cherry said.



PolyMet headquarters on the Range outside of Hoyt Lakes.

MARK SAUER/MESABI DAILY NEWS

# PolyMet CEO Jon Cherry Modern-era mining man on Range

**BILL HANNA**  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

DULUTH — Jon Cherry is a modern-day mining man.

He is just as comfortable shaking the toughened and calloused hands of blue collar workers whose labors bring minerals to the surface and then the marketplace as he is pressing the flesh with investors who provide the bucks that play a big role in making it all possible.

And you can't have one without the other for a huge mining venture such as the first copper/nickel/precious metals project in Minnesota's history.

A product of the wide-open spaces of Montana and its mining culture, the PolyMet CEO has been in his new job for about 18 months now.

He spends plenty of time with the money people — often in Europe and Canada — for the copper/nickel/precious metals project for which PolyMet, a Canadian company, will eventually put in \$650 million before profits will be mined. The company has already invested \$150 million into the venture, with \$80 million of it for environmental review.

Much of that \$80 million is wrapped up in an environmental impact statement that is now in a 90-day public comment period. Three public hearings — one in Duluth, the others in Aurora and St. Paul — were recently held on the document.

Cherry was smiling and relaxed a couple hours before the five-hour hearing process began in Duluth in mid-January.

"I'm excited we are at this milestone. A lot of work and effort has gone into this," he said.

That certainly must also be the feeling of investors for a project now nearly a decade in development, with an EIS ruling of adequacy needed before the 20 or so federal and state air, water and land permits can be granted.

The adequacy determination would pave the way for construction (an estimated 2 million hours of work) of the mine in the footprint of the former LTV Mining site near Hoyt Lakes and Babbitt; the permits would then open the door to production and 360 permanent jobs, and hundreds more spin-off positions.

Cherry said recently that he remains "hopeful" that construction could still begin by the end of the year or the very earliest 2015, with a start-up 18 months out from there.

PolyMet's main investor, Swiss international commodities and mining giant GlencoreXstrata, is one of the litany of criticisms by opponents of the nonferrous project.

They lament that millions of money from outside the area, especially



PolyMet CEO Jon Cherry talks about his company's progress in the ongoing regulation process during an interview prior to the start of the Duluth public hearing.

MARK SAUER/MESABI DAILY NEWS

by Glencore, is not good for the Iron Range.

And they also point to Glencore Board of Directors' interim chairman, Tony Hayward, as an enemy of the environment.

Hayward was running British Petroleum at the time of the Gulf of

Mexico oil spill in 2011, which was triggered by an oil rig explosion.

But such a major project on the Iron Range's rich NorthMet complex, which stretches about 150 miles from Duluth to the Canadian border and is home to perhaps the largest concentra-

tion of copper, nickel and strategic metals in the world, would not be anywhere near possible without such a huge investment from outside the area.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is the top dog of the three co-lead

government agencies involved in the process, and its commissioner, Tom Landwehr, made just that point in an interview with the Mesabi Daily News prior to the EIS public hearings.

"Everyone should be pleased that there is

SEE CHERRY, PAGE 17



## Bachelor of Science-Engineering

### Located in the heart of the Iron Range

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& Minnesota State University Mankato





# CHERRY

FROM PAGE 16

such a major investment in Minnesota from outside the area," he said.

And supporters of the project point out that the minerals to be mined on the Iron Range are vital to products — computers, catalytic converters, medical devices, green economy devices — that are part of everyday life for everyone, including, ironically, the opponents.

"We, all of us, use these metals every day," Cherry said.

In addition, supporters counter environmental concerns of project critics by pointing out the venture will only be done if it meets federal and state environmental standards.

Company officials say it will exceed those regulations, which, in Minnesota, are some of the strictest in the country.

"All involved are environmentalists," Cherry said.

The PolyMet CEO said investors have been anxious for the project to move ahead, but are also patient "because they see the value, literally, in the ground. They are in it for the long-term."

PolyMet stock has recently been on the ascent.

It closed at \$1.19 a share on Friday, Feb. 14, which is up from 97 cents a share when the hearings began and up considerably from 74 cents a share on Oct. 30, 2013.

Cherry said he is



MARK SAUER/MESABI DAILY NEWS

Much of the former LTV plant in Hoyt Lakes remains in place ready to start life again as PolyMet.

confident the stock price "will catch up to the value in the ground. We're not overly concerned about the stock price right now. It's a great project and ore body."



Cherry is based in PolyMet's corporate office in St. Paul. He brought a history of

environmental education and experience in developing and securing permits for other nonferrous mine projects in Michigan and Arizona to the company.

Cherry received an environmental engineering degree from Montana Tech of the University of Montana.

He had been general

manager responsible for permitting and the development of the Eagle nickel/copper project in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

Prior to assuming his position with PolyMet, he was vice president for strategic direction in environmental permitting and compliance along with legal matters

tied to development of a copper project in Arizona for the Rio Tinto Mining Co.

Cherry says he feels right at home on the Iron Range.

"The Iron Range and its people are unique to themselves. This is a mining area and many of the people are third- and fourth-generation

mining. "We are humbled by the support of this project by the people of the Iron Range. They know mining and they know this is all about how we are going to mine," Cherry said.

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Iron is the core of our planet and even shines in the sun and stars.

If the use of fire was the revolutionary discovery that propelled cavemen to a new level of existence, the use of iron ore to make steel catapulted humankind into modern society. Iron ore has become an integral part of all aspects of our lives, from the personal and social to the political and financial.

According to the Minerals Education Coalition, every American born will need 27,416 pounds of iron ore in their lifetime. The world business magazine, Financial Times, touts that iron ore is “more integral to the global economy than any other commodity, except perhaps oil.”

The use of products made from iron ore dates back thousands of years when it was first used as a metal for tools, weapons and structures. When the natural iron-bearing mineral iron ore is commercially usable, metallic iron is extracted from iron ore and used to produce steel. According to the U.S. Geological Study, by definition, steel is a combination of iron

with a small amount of carbon. Thousands of products having various chemical composition, forms, and sizes are made of iron and steel by casting, forging, and rolling processes. Iron and steel comprise about 95 percent of all the tonnage of metal produced annually in the United States and the world. On the average, iron and steel are by far the least expensive of the world's metals. In some applications such as steel framing for large buildings, no other materials are suitable because of strength requirements, reports the USGS.

If you really think about all the products that result from this process, most have very important applications in our lives from the simple to the complex, such as:

- Nails.
- Saws, hammers, and drills.
- Hinges, door handles, window latches and frames.
- Electrical conduit.
- Water pipes and gas pipes.
- Fireplace grills.
- Stoves and refrigerators.
- Rails for trains and hulls of ships.
- Cars.
- Girders for making buildings.
- Cutlery and knives.
- Rulers.
- Computers and cell phones.
- Modern wind turbines.

SEE FERROUS, PAGE 19



MARK SAUER/MESABI DAILY NEWS

A few of the everyday items made possible by non-ferrous mining.

## Made from Copper/Nickel/Precious Metals

**ANGIE RIEBE**  
STAFF WRITER

How's Uncle Fred doing with his new artificial knee?

That catalytic converter in your vehicle sure helps reduce air emissions and keep the environment more clean, doesn't it?

Wow, those big wind turbines up on the ridge by Minntac are impressive. And they generate clean energy, too, don't they?

I don't remember what life was like without cell phones, do you?

Computers sure are a great big bay window to the world. We would certainly have a nar-

row, small view without them, wouldn't we?

Aircraft engines sure are powerful, aren't they?

What a beautiful ring. What is it made of?

What do all the above questions have in common? Copper/nickel/precious metals (nonferrous) mining such as the Poly-Met and Twin Metals projects for minerals in the vast and resource-rich Duluth Complex in northeastern Minnesota in general, the Iron Range specifically.

Here's a look at the products essential to everyday life for all Americans and their connection

to copper/nickel/precious metals mining in the region.

• **Copper:**  
The metal is a great electrical conductor, which is essential for power generation and transmission.

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SEE NON-FERROUS, PAGE 19



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# FERROUS

FROM PAGE 18

thing we use in our daily lives, "if it wasn't grown; it was probably mined," as the Iron Mining Association of Minnesota puts it.

Since the U.S. became the world's leading iron ore producer in 1898, Minnesota's iron ranges have supplied the iron ore that has fed the nation's steel mills. From 1900 to 1980, the Mesabi Range contributed about 60 percent of the country's total iron ore output. Mining shaped the region's roots. It dictated where towns would be established and brought thousands of immigrants from all over the world to fill new jobs in a booming industry.

Not only has iron mining fueled our local livelihoods, it has even served in the independence of our nation. Early iron mining in New England provided iron to make the cannons of the Continental Army in the Revolutionary War.

Minnesota's iron mining held vital importance during World War II when the entire free world relied on the state's iron ore to make

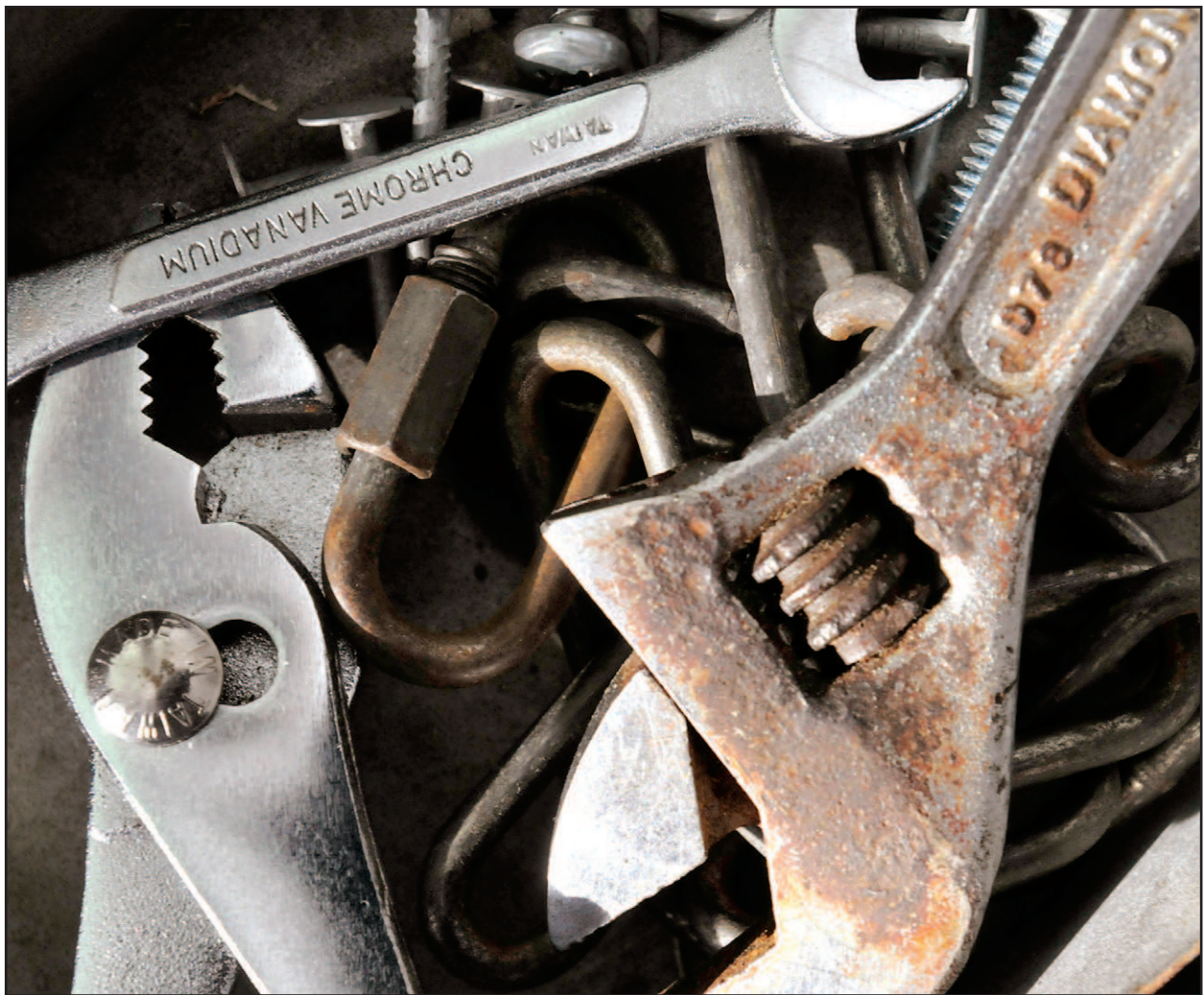
ships, tanks, guns and other steel armaments, reports the Iron Mining Association of Minnesota. And, after the war, this significance continued as automobiles, new buildings, roads, home appliances and other items were required for a rapidly growing nation.

Mining - as an occupation, an industry and a way of life - formed our heritage, our economy and our families.

It was mining that provided a solid education to many who would not have had such opportunities otherwise. Tour guides at the Minnesota Discovery Center in Chisholm tell the story of the Iron Range and explain how the area's schools were second to none, amply funded by mining company taxes. In an area with a high immigrant population, schools were critical to teaching American values and the English language.

Mining continues to power our communities and our lives - both directly in business and commodity and consequentially in the products we use every single day.

Every time we pick up our cell phone, hop in



A few of the items made possible by ferrous mining.

MARK SAUER/MESABI DAILY NEWS

the car or put hammer to nail, we should be reminded of the role iron mining plays in the success of this place we're proud to call home.

Moving forward, mining operations are becoming major tourist attractions that bring

thousands of tourists to northern Minnesota each year to marvel at the open pits and taconite plants. Driving along Highway 169 near Chisholm, the Iron Man memorial statue stands 83 feet tall and is meant to portray the strength,

humility and weariness of an iron range miner at the end of a hard day's work, as Minnesota Discovery Center tour guides will tell you. Said to be the third tallest freestanding statue in the United States exceeded only by the

Statue of Liberty in New York City and Our Lady of the Rockies in Butte, Montana, the Iron Man serves to memorialize the great importance of mining in northern Minnesota. It was dedicated as "The Emergence of Man through Steel."

# NON-FERROUS

FROM PAGE 18

copper.

World copper consumption continues on the rise, especially with underdeveloped countries becoming more developed and increasing the demand for those products.

• Nickel:  
The metal is both used in many

daily commercial products and also for its strategic properties.

The main use of nickel is stainless steel, which has a myriad of applications because of its strength and corrosive resistance.

It is used in medical instruments and devices ranging from scalpels to major artificial devices.

It also is necessary for kitchen equipment, aircraft engines, gas and power plant turbines, construction

equipment products and other industrial uses.

There is a reported shortage of the metal in the world. The Duluth Complex has the only potential source of nickel in the United States.

• Platinum/Palladium:  
The automotive industry since 1979 has been using the platinum group of metals to clean the environment through catalytic converters that are required in vehicles to cut air emis-

sions. Catalytic converters are also used on forklifts, mining equipment, trucks, buses, trains and other large vehicles.

Platinum-supported catalysts are additionally used in a large group of products ranging from computers and cell phones to jewelry; from missile nose cones and jet engine fuel nozzles to photography.

Minnesota Power's investment in wind energy began with the turbines at Taconite Ridge in Mountain Iron, Minn. Today, our commitment extends to the Bison Wind Energy Center in North Dakota where 165 turbines will be operational by the end of the year.

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# Unique Library



The Drill Core Library in Hibbing houses thousands of boxes containing drilling samples from all across the state.

BRIAN AROLA/  
HIBBING DAILY TRIBUNE

## 9,000 samples of drillings

BRIAN AROLA  
HIBBING DAILY TRIBUNE

HIBBING — You won't find books in this library, but its contents are just as — if not more — valuable.

The Drill Core Library in Hibbing houses approximately 9,000 samples of drillings from all across the state, and draws in people from even further out than that.

David Dahl, geologist and GIS specialist for Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), said the facility is among the finest of its kind in the world.

The facility boasts of being the first stop in Minnesota for researchers and explorers investigating the state's geological and mineral potential.

Terry Boerboom, senior scientist with the Minnesota Geological Survey, was recently researching a pallet of samples at the library. His base for the day was in what could be thought of as the "reading room" of the library, Dahl said.

There, Boerboom and many others before him will read box after box of samples for any number of purposes. He said he'd spent a lot of time at the library over the years, and even helped map where every sample at the library was drilled from in the state.

Dahl unfurled the huge map, which featured countless black dots on the Iron Range and elsewhere.

A current mapping project brought Boerboom to the Drill Core Library. The rocks he was looking at came from Kanabec County, where he'll make a more detailed map as part of the County Atlas Program.

Without the library, Boerboom said there'd be very few places in the state that he could successfully map.

"It's a great place to come and look at all the core," he said. "A lot of states don't have anything like this."



David Dahl of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources slides out a box of core at the Drill Core Library in Hibbing.

Fellow researcher Steven Hauck, the deputy director of the minerals division of the Natural Resources Research Institute (NRRI) in Duluth, said there's few places in the world like this.

Hauck was using the facility to help a company analyze samples of rocks that could potentially lead to economic gains.

"Our job is to create jobs in an environmentally-sound manner," he said, adding that the library makes a lot of the work possible.

SEE LIBRARY, PAGE 21



The Drill Core Library in Hibbing is home to thousands of boxes of drilling samples.

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Most boxes in the Drill Core Library hold 10 feet of rock arranged in five rows.



BRIAN AROLA/HIBBING DAILY TRIBUNE

Terry Boerboom of the Minnesota Geological Survey researches a sample of rock from Kanabec County.

## LIBRARY

FROM PAGE 20

Hauck estimated that his crew has analyzed more than 100,000 boxes over the years.

Dahl said each box has about 10 feet of core broken up into five segments, which would mean Hauck's team has researched well more than 1 million feet of core since 1988.

100,000 boxes is just a small portion of the facility's capacity too. Building three's south expansion alone could hold 1.3 million feet of core.

Walking through the actual library warehouse, the sheer scale of the room might surprise you. Row after row of stacks of samples stretch to the high ceiling, where only a forklift could retrieve them.

The rows are narrow too. Dahl said a forklift could fit between them



SEE LIBRARY, PAGE 22 One row of drill core features stacks upon stacks of samples.



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Terry Boerboom of the Minnesota Geological Survey points at the Iron Range on the geological map he helped make. The map shows every place in the state that has core at the Drill Core Library.

## LIBRARY

FROM PAGE 21

with inches to spare on each side.

Looking at the narrowness of the aisle, one might be skeptical, but Dahl said a magnetic line in the floor guides the forklift in so it doesn't bump the sides.

The thousands upon thousands of samples include drillings from near and far from just about any drilling done in the state since 1980, when it became law to provide samples.

"The state passed a law in 1980 that said that everyone that drills an exploratory boring in Minnesota has to turn in at least a quarter of the diameter of the core for the entire length of that boring as an archive sample for future research," Dahl said.

Stopping at an aisle about halfway into the warehouse, Dahl pulled out a two-foot-long box of drilled samples.

He explained that the box was core from the tunnel that the Minneapolis Light Rail Transit system goes through to connect the city to the



SEE LIBRARY, PAGE 23 A box containing core from the tunnel at the Minneapolis Lightrail is housed at the Core Drill Library.

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# LIBRARY

FROM PAGE 22

Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport. It might take 20 years for that box to be requested by someone, he said, but the sample and library is there for anyone who ever needs it.

Keeping a record of core samples like this allows geologists from all over learn new things about rocks from Minnesota, Boerboom said.

Researchers from Michigan, for instance, can come to the Core Drill Library and see samples they wouldn't see in their own state. By archiving so many samples, it allows a flow of ideas from different regions to develop.

Since some of the samples go back more than a century, the library's expansiveness allows current geologists to look at older rocks from a different perspective, Dahl said.

"There are things we haven't even thought of to look at in those cores," he said. "We may be looking at cores that are 30 or 40 years old, but we've got new ideas that the geologists then couldn't have even dreamed up."

Geologists will have plenty of chances to look at the cores housed at the library in May, when the Institute on Lake Superior Geology holds its 60th annual symposium in Hibbing. The event will include a field trip to the Drill Core Library. By then, there should be even more samples available for perusal.

At the back of building three at the library, more boxes on pallets had just been delivered and were waiting to be stacked.

Looking around, it didn't appear there'd be a place for the new arrivals, but around a corner was a whole different room, the same size as the previous one but with empty rows waiting for boxes to fill them.

They probably won't have to wait long, Dahl said.

"If all of the exploration projects going on in the state shut down right now, and all of the explorers turned in their core, then this would be overflowing," he said.

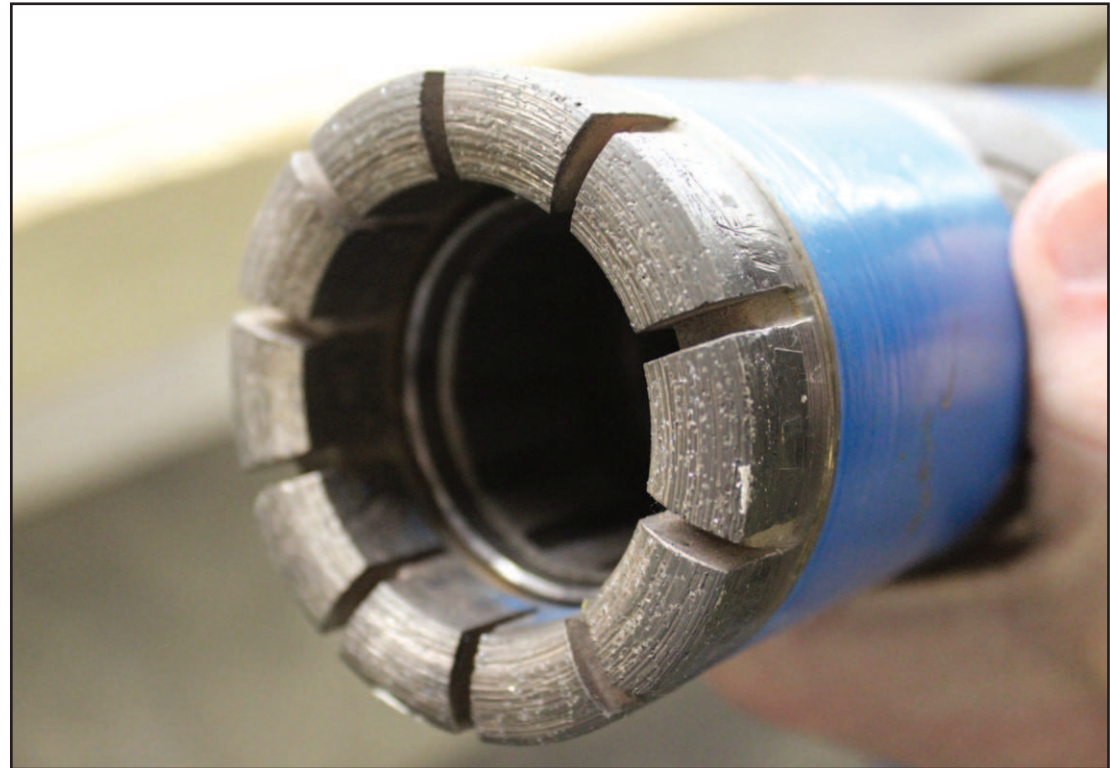
The new arrivals ensure there's always something new at the library, he added.



BRIAN AROLA/HIBBING DAILY TRIBUNE

Newer stacks are yet to be filled in the newest expansion to the Drill Core Library.

An example of the drill that might be used to make a sample of the cores.



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**GUEST COLUMN**

**TOM LANDWEHR**

DNR Commissioner

# DNR involved in almost every aspect of mining



MARK SAUER/MESABI DAILY NEWS

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Commissioner Tom Landwehr makes a point during an interview at the Mesabi Daily News.

Mining and natural resource conservation have a long history of coexisting in Minnesota. The Department of Natural Resources has leased out state land for mineral extraction on the Mesabi Iron Range since the 1890s, and has served in a regulatory role issuing permits and monitoring the environmental performance of mining activities for decades.

A healthy mining sector is only sustainable if mining activities are environmentally sound and Minnesota's air, water, land and wildlife resources are protected and conserved. As mining has expanded in both scope and type, so has the DNR's role in both managing the development of the state's mineral resources, and in ensuring best practices are employed for sound conservation and reclamation.

In its regulatory role, the DNR is closely involved with partner agencies in ensuring thorough and rigorous environmental review of proposals for new and expanded mines. The Department is also responsible for several different permits needed by mining projects, including the Water Appropriation Permit, Public Waters Permit, Dam Safety Permit, Endangered Species Taking Permit, and the

Permit to Mine.

The precise mix of required local, state, and federal permits is determined by the particulars of a proposed project. But in all instances, the DNR seeks to fully coordinate its permitting with other regulatory agencies, in the interest of both environmental protection and efficiency for applicants. Further, we have some of the best environmental scientists in the country helping ensure that projects meet all environmental standards.

Today, the DNR is involved in almost every aspect of mining. In its mineral management role, the department maintains mineral land records and leases state-owned minerals for the benefit of the School and University Trust Funds and other local government owners. In the past fiscal year, mineral receipts off of state land totaled more than \$49 million, benefiting local units of government on the Mesabi Iron Range, the University of Minnesota and K-12 education throughout the state. This fiscal year we expect mineral receipts to top \$70 million.

The department also manages the nationally-recognized drill core

repository in Hibbing. Geologists and other scientists from all over the world visit the library to study drill core and extensive geologic data archives.

The department also has an environmental research site in Hibbing where long-term studies of nonferrous mineral extraction are conducted, with some studies ongoing for up to 25 years. The type of experiments performed ranges from lab studies to outdoor ore tests to operational studies with detailed analysis.

To our knowledge, much of this work has not been duplicated anywhere else. It is particularly notable because the DNR has carried out this research solely in anticipation of proposed mining development. That is, there were no nonferrous mines operational in the state when the research began. The department and state leaders have deemed it important to conduct this research to predict how minerals will react over time in a mining environment so steps can be taken to understand, eliminate, reduce and/or mitigate the environmental impacts of mining.

Although current mineral receipts are quite strong, the department is also investing in the future. Ninety-

seven percent of Minnesota's current mineral receipts are derived from iron ore on the Mesabi Iron Range, which supplies North America's blast furnaces. There has not been a new blast furnace constructed in North America since the 1970s. In the past two years, four blast furnaces have permanently closed. To enhance the long-term vitality of Minnesota's mineral and mining industries, the department works with university researchers, company partners, and industry associations to develop new products, seek expanded markets, and diversify the state's mineral commodities.

Minnesota is fortunate to have some of the most pristine natural areas in the country, outstanding recreational opportunities, and also some of the most valuable mineral resources. All are clearly "world class."

The DNR is committed to managing these treasures — the environment and the minerals — for the benefit of all Minnesotans and will continue to do so with the professionalism and rigor that Minnesotans both expect and demand.



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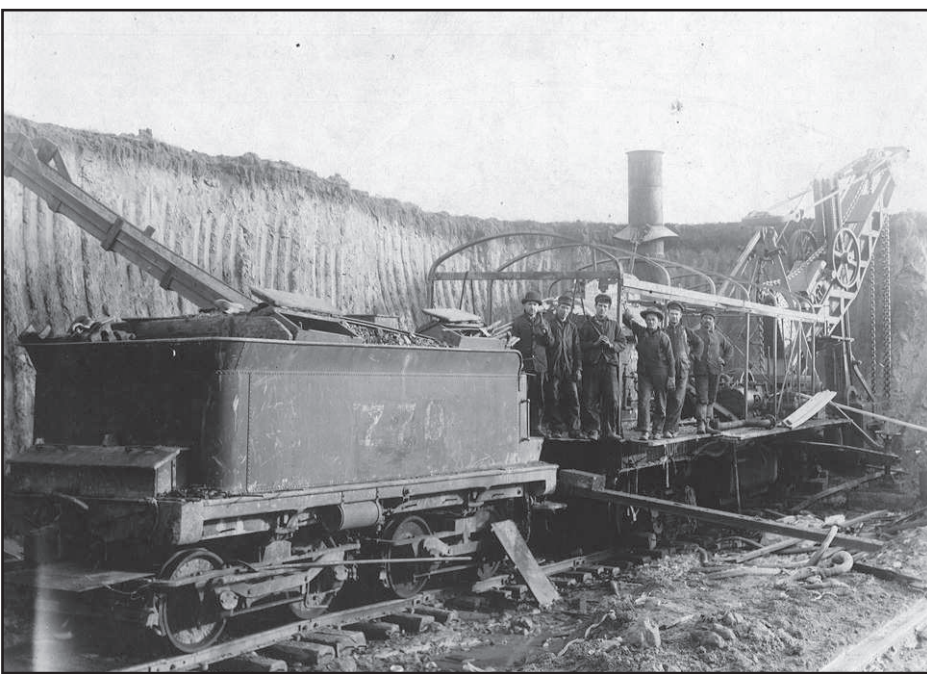
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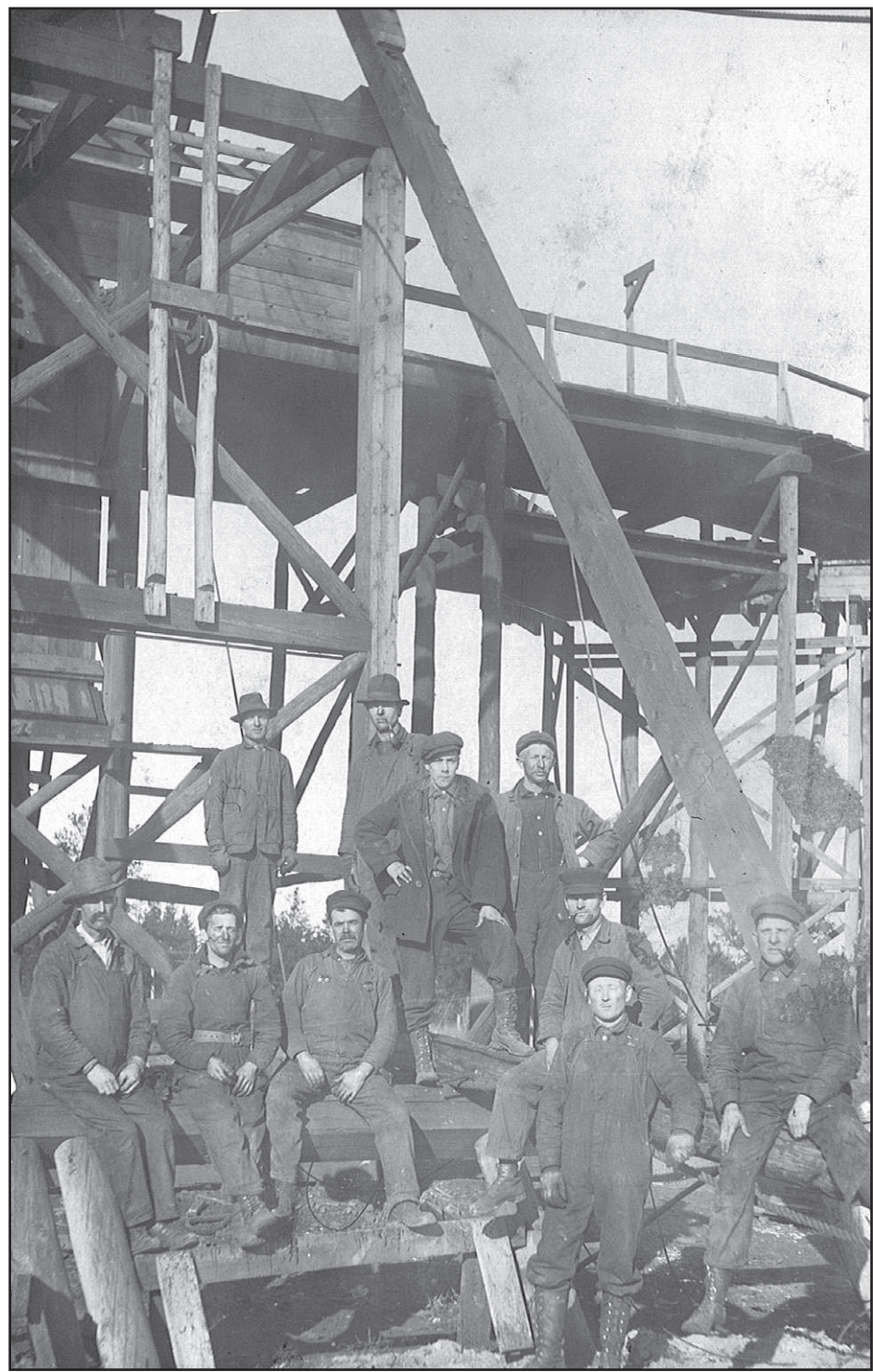


# CUYUNA: The Lost Range

## Important Role in Minnesota Mining Industry



Workers stand on the platform of an open mine pit steam shovel.



Burrows Mine.

CROW WING COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**LISA ROSEMORE**  
GRAND RAPIDS  
HERALD-REVIEW

When most Minnesotans think of "The Range," towns like Coleraine, Hibbing, Virginia, Eveleth, Tower or Soudan probably come to mind. Towns on the Mesabi or Vermilion ranges.

When most Minnesotans think of the Minnesota towns of Brainerd, Deerwood or Crosby, lakes and recreation are probably the first things that come to mind. The Range? Mining? Most likely not.

But it should.

A good portion of Crow Wing County in central Minnesota once supported a thriving mining industry. And while the Cuyuna Range may not be home to any active mines today, it played an important part in Minnesota's mining industry.

### A man and his dog

Whether it's a tour guide at the Minnesota Discovery Center or any number of books published about the Cuyuna Range, the story told of how Cuyuna Range ore was discovered is pretty much the same. Cuyler Adams, a railroad company employee, was out with his St. Bernard dog, Una, to survey property he owned near Deerwood. Around the noon hour, he found his compass needle and his shadow were not matching up direction-wise, so he figured there must be

a large ore deposit interfering with his compass.

It was Adams' wife who coined the name, "Cuyuna," a merging of Adams' first name with the name of their dog.

According to the book, "Iron Range Country: A Historical Travelogue of Minnesota's Iron Range," Adams saw no ore outcroppings as there were on the Mesabi and Vermilion ranges; and exploratory drilling began in May 1903.

This story, however, may not be completely accurate.

A very faded photo in the Crow Wing County Historical Society (CWCH) archives showed a group of men, identified as miners in Brainerd, 1880.

One opinion disputing Adams' accounts is that of an anonymous historian. In the CWCH archives, the folder about Adams held one aged sheet of paper with a timeline biography about Adams. In old-style cursive writing, the unknown historian wrote that a story about Adams cashing in railroad stock for 100,000 acres of land, then selling the land was "Adams' tale. I suspect much of it is 'plagiarism.'"

At the bottom of the page, the historian held nothing back in offering an opinion about Adams.

"Adams filched a lot of his stories and many of his experiences may be doubted," the historian wrote. "Dishonest in



The Ironton water tower peeks from behind the old Spina Hotel in Ironton.

LISA ROSEMORE/GRAND RAPIDS HERALD-REVIEW

many clever respects."

### Others were 'enthusiastic' about ore

According to an article about Cuyuna iron ore shipments in the Nov. 28, 1970 "Skillings' Mining Review," a weekly newsletter, exploration of the Cuyuna Range "was late because of the heavy glacial drift, and the area was more or less settled before the orebodies were discovered." One man, Dr. C.R. Van Hise "saw possibilities in 1892" and another, Dr. C.K. Leith "was quite enthusiastic about the prospects" in 1901.

### Mining begins

Whether or not Adams actually discovered ore in the Deerwood area may be up for debate, but what isn't up for debate is mining soon started growing on the

Cuyuna.

Low grade ore was discovered through the 1903 exploratory drilling, according to "Skillings." The south Cuyuna Range contained limonite and brown ore while the north range has "hematite, some manganiferous and some high grade ore. It was on the north range that most of the Cuyuna's mines were found."

The newsletter stated that the first rail shipment from the district, from the Kennedy orebody by Rabbit Lake in 1911, was 147,649 tons. It was "the largest tonnage by a first shipper from any of the original ranges in the Great Lakes Region."

By 1914, there were 16 mines operating on the Cuyuna, according to "Iron Range Country." By the end of World War I, 40 mines were

employing nearly 3,000 men. Because ore was so important to the war effort, "men who worked Cuyuna mines were exempted from the draft."

The Cuyuna Range ore had a high manganese content and manganese was in high demand during WWI.

Skillings stated that in 1915, the 1 million ton mark was surpassed and in 1917, 2.42 million tons were produced. In 1918, 2.47 million tons were shipped. In 1919, with the war ended, production fell to 1.8 million tons. In 1920, there was an increase to 2.19 million tons shipped, but in 1921, a depression year according to the Skillings article, shipments from the Cuyuna Range fell to 489,500 tons. By 1929, production was up to 2.59 million tons.

### A problem even back then

A couple years ago, Iron Rangers (the Mesabi and Vermilion variety) were furious that the Minnesota State Legislature was considering raiding taconite tonnage tax to help balance the state budget.

Turns out this isn't exactly a new problem.

The Brainerd Chamber of Commerce published a seven-page pamphlet titled "Injustice of the Tonnage Tax on Ore," dated Feb. 27, 1917 and addressed to Minnesota state legislators.

"In behalf of the people of Crow Wing County, we beg to submit one more protest against the passage of the tonnage Tax Bill before you now," the chamber wrote.

The chamber felt it

SEE CUYUNA, PAGE 26



CROW WING COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A group of miners near Ironton, Minn.



The Crow Wing Historical Society in Brainerd, Minn., has a small mining display in its museum, depicting artifacts from more than 70 years of mining on the Cuyuna Range.

LISA ROSEMORE/  
GRAND RAPIDS  
HERALD-REVIEW

## CUYUNA

FROM PAGE 25

was "unjust to pay this money into the State Treasury" and contended that "this tax, if ever collected, should go into the county treasury for the use of the people who pay it ... it should not be taken from us and used to pay the State taxes for owners of property in other parts of the state."

After praising "Mesaba ore" as "high grade, free from objectionable ingredients," the chamber wrote that Cuyuna ore was "further from the market" and lay in the ground in small bodies.

"Most must be mined through shafts," the pamphlet declared, adding that the value of the ore in the ground was 25 cents a ton. It stated that Mesaba ore, "more susceptible to pit mining," was worth approximately \$1 a ton in the ground.

### 'The miners strike'

Just as the other two ranges, the Cuyuna Range also saw labor strife. In a typewritten paper in the CWCH archives dated March 1936, an account of a miners strike was given by George Pane to Anna Peterson.

The account stated the two week strike was in April, but did not give a year. "Between six and seven hundred men walked out."

"The disagreement arose over the fact that the men wanted more pay and 'no contract time,'" the account said. "This had been brewing for over

a year and was made worse by agitators from out of town."

Two of the agitators named in the account were "Attorney and Mrs. T. Latimer of Minneapolis, (Mr. Latimer is now Mayor of Minneapolis.)"

"Those agitators were making so much trouble that the Commercial Club of Crosby got together and planned to kidnap them and ride them out of town," the account continued. "The first night they planned to get Mr. and Mrs. Latimer, but they left for Minneapolis on the 11:30 train. The deputies had followed them to Deerwood to see that they left, otherwise they would have got them."

The account went on to describe attempts to kidnap other "agitators," with one so-called agitator, O.M. Thompson of Minot, N.D., having Pane "arrested for kidnapping." Pane refused to plead guilty to kidnapping, but pleaded guilty to assault and battery, for which he was fined \$64.

"The mining company paid (Pane's) fine," the report said.

The account went on to explain that Pane and two other men were ultimately tried in state court on kidnapping charges and found guilty by a jury.

"Newman, Pane and Sullivan each received a six month sentence to Stillwater, but were sentenced from 1-40 years."

From the account, the strike didn't seem to do much for the miners.

"After the arrest of the men the miners all went back to work for the same pay, and the promoter of the strike got

a better job," the account claimed. "And the men that stayed by the company during the time of the account got nothing, not even a raise."

□

### Boom and Bust

Like the mines on the Mesabi and Vermilion ranges, the Cuyuna saw boom and bust. Skillings reported that in 1932, a mere 98,727 tons were shipped from the Cuyuna Range, but ten years later, in 1942, production passed the 3 million ton mark with 19 mines in operation. In 1951, 3.5 million tons were shipped but by the 1960s, less than 1 million tons annually were shipped.

According to "Cuyuna Country: A Peoples History, Vol. III," in 1967, "the end of an era for the Cuyuna Range and the state of Minnesota came Thursday, June 1 with the official closing of the Armour No. 2 mine, the last underground mine to operate in the state."

A few small mines continued to operate. Ore shipments in the 1970s varied between 168,148 tons (1973) to 308,875 (1974), according to "Cuyuna Country." However in 1983, "the lowest tonnage of ore since record keeping began in 1925 on the Cuyuna Range was tallied in the year past at a figure of 14,580 tons." By 1986, the annual state mine inspector report showed no ore shipped from the Cuyuna Range in 1985, making 1984 the last year any ore shipped from the Cuyuna Range.

□

### Cuyuna today

Driving around the Cuyuna Range today, there are very few signs that it used to be a booming mining area. Unlike driving on the Beltline (Highway 169), there are no tailings piles, no red ore tracks marking the roads. But bits of its mining past are still around: Billboards promoting local businesses have names that would seem right at home on the Mesabi and Vermilion ranges, names that end with "ik" or "vich." Even in the small town of Ironton, a dentist office in an old, once-grand hotel building has the name "Dr. Perpich" on the door. The Crosby-Ironton High School has a sign in front proudly proclaiming it the home of the Rangers, the team's name. The mascot on the sign is an iron miner, wearing overalls and a mining helmet.

A granite monument honoring 41 men who lost their lives on Feb. 5, 1924 in the worst mining disaster in Minnesota history, the Milford Mine Disaster, sits near Highway 210.

The old Croft Mine is now Croft Mine Historical Park. Many of the old mine pits have filled with water, with some stocked with fish by the Minnesota DNR.

But there could be more mining in the Cuyuna Range's future. According to a report in the Brainerd Dispatch dated Jan. 2, 2013, Crow Wing Power was looking into mining a manganese deposit near Emily, Minn.

"The manganese deposit near Emily is the largest in North America and recently had been pursued by foreign interests," the paper reported.



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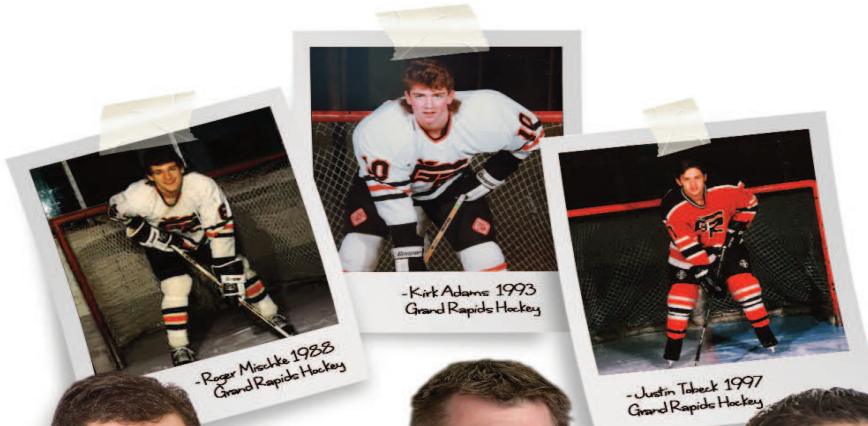
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A close up of the Cuyuna Range Miners Memorial in Ironton.

LISA ROSEMORE/  
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HERALD-REVIEW

# MINNESOTA'S WORST MINING DISASTER

## Horrific history at Milford Mine

ANGIE RIEBE  
MESABI DAILY NEWS

Feb. 5, 1924. A day of history for Minnesota. A day of heartache and heroism for young miner named Frank Hrvatin Jr.

It was a day like most others at the Milford Mine, two miles north of Crosby in Crow Wing County. Miners were laboring underground on the 175-foot and 135-foot levels of the 200-foot-deep manganese mine, owned by George H. Crosby. Frank Jr., and his dad, Frank Sr., were both hard at work that afternoon — the elder Hrvatin performing his duties as a blaster, the son laboring aside his veteran partner, Harry Hosford.

The miners had blasted an underground shaft near the adjacent Foley Lake, and Frank had just dumped ore down a transfer chute, when a sudden gust of wind hit him. It was rather strange, he thought. But he had little time to consider it further, as rushing water appeared on the level below. "Look at the water, Harry!" Frank shouted to his partner. "Oh, my God! For God's sake run!" replied Harry. "The whole lake has come in!"

Harry's observations proved correct. The boggy water from Foley Lake roared into the mine, filling it in no time to within 15 feet of the surface. The blast of wind that preceded the gushing water blew out the carbide gas lamps on many miners' hats or knocked them off altogether. Miners scrambled for their lives in the darkness. Frank and Harry tripped along a 600-foot drift until they reached the

shaft and began frantically climbing the ladder. Frank pulled Harry, who was soaked in mud to his waist, onto the ladder behind him.

A veteran miner, Matt Kangas, was already navigating his way up, but had little strength for the 175-foot climb to the surface.

As water rose up the shaft, Frank jumped in to help — supporting the older miner's legs on his shoulders, rung by rung, the entire way out.

All three made it to the surface, collapsing once they'd reached the top. They were the last ones to find their way to safety. The last of only seven miners who survived.

Frank remained by the shaft, starting into the murky, bubbling water. He knew his father was still trapped below with the others.

Frank Hrvatin Sr., was among the 41 miners who died that day.

Years later, Frank Jr. would recall that tragic afternoon, saying it took less than 15 minutes for the mine to flood. "I knew I'd never see my dad no more," he said more than 50 years after the disaster.

Frank remembered somehow summoning "super human strength" to save his own young life and to assist his fellow miners.

On the day of the Milford Mine disaster — Minnesota's worst mining disaster — Frank Jr. was just 15 years old.

It is believed the terrible flood occurred due to a cave-in at the mine's easternmost end that tapped into mud with a direct connection to Foley Lake.

Thirty-eight of the 41 miners who drowned were married. They left behind more than 80 children.

Among the dead was Clinton Har-



ris, a "skip-tender" who operated an electric hoist that dumped ore from the ore cars into a bucket, called a "skip," which was raised to the surface. On Feb. 5, 1924, Harris was filling in for a skip-tender who was sick. Although the veteran minter could have escaped, he remained at his post, yanking the cord of a whistle to warn miners in the upper levels to get out. For more than four hours after the mud and water sealed off the shaft, the warning bell continued to sound. It's believed that Harris either tied the cord of the whistle around his waist so the alarm would continue, or he became entangled in it. Eventually someone in the engine room disconnected the bell to silence the haunting sound. Word of the disaster spread quickly through Crosby. People watched as the water in Foley Lake sank lower and lower, emptying into the mine.

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MARK SAUER/MESABI DAILY NEWS

The Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation Board, headquartered in Eveleth, could have new governance by the end of the agency's fiscal year on June 30.

# Times are a changin' for the IRRRB

**BILL HANNA**  
MESABI DAILY NEWS

EVELETH — The economic development driver and mining tax engine of the region — the Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation Board — could be fundamentally changed with legislative and agency action this year. The Mine Reinvestment Program, which provides tax rebates for mining companies that must be put back into capital improvements at Iron Range taconite plants, is now receiving mixed reviews from board members.

Changes will be looked at in St. Paul this

legislative session, according to board member and state Rep. Carly Melin, DFL-Hibbing, who calls the program an ongoing tax break for the companies, regardless the condition of the mining economy.

However, fellow board members and DFL state Sens. Tom Bakk of Cook, who is Senate majority leader, and David Tomassoni of Chisholm, say the program helps trigger major investments by mining companies into Range facilities.

And the governance of the agency will also likely be on the Iron Range Delegation's legislative agenda at some point in the session.

A special task force met for months last year and presented two recommendations to protect the Douglas J. Johnson Fund, which is funded by mining company production dollars — considered local property taxes — for economic development projects, from budget raiders in St. Paul.

The IRRR Board met solely on the governance issue and the task force's suggestions in January. Now it will be up to board members/legislators and IRRRB Commissioner Tony Sertich to forge a new direction for the agency and its DJJ Fund. Full legislative approval is

all but guaranteed as lawmakers from other areas generally go along with Range lawmakers regarding IRRRB-related legislation.

□  
**Mine Reinvestment Program:**

The program was created in 1993 to help mining companies with their capital costs solely

on the Iron Range.

The current taconite production tax is \$2.56 per ton, with 30.01 cents of that eligible for a rebate to the companies. In the 2012 production year, collectible in 2013, \$12,231,412 was generated to be used for rebates.

The annual pre-Christmas IRRRB meeting al-

ways has an appropriate gift component of public works grants to communities and tax rebates to some mining operations.

The holiday spirit was certainly present with the community grants, as representatives of several area towns were on hand to show their appreciation.

SEE IRRRB, PAGE 29

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# IRRRB

FROM PAGE 28

And officials with ArcelorMittal's Minorca mine in Virginia, Magneta-tion's waste ore recovery operations, Mesabi Nugget's pig iron plant near Hoyt Lakes, Northshore Mining in Silver Bay and Babbitt and United Taconite in Eveleth were at the meet-ing to describe projects that would be funded in part by the IRRRB tax rebates.

The mining representatives got some lumps of coal, too, from a couple lawmakers. But the program also had its share of holiday cheer from two state senators.

"I agree reinvestments are good. But no other businesses get such rebates. It's more of a tax cut than a reinvest-ment. It's an extremely costly program to the Iron Range," said Rep. Melin.

She said the agency has paid out \$174 million in tax rebates since 1993. "That's more than there is now in the Doug Johnson Fund," which currently has \$150 million in it, the Hibbing lawmaker said.

"The amount rebated back has produced public good. But we are not being intellectually honest with citizens. We're not being straightfor-ward," said board member and state Rep. Tom Anzelc, DFL-Balsam Town-ship.

"These companies are spending tens of millions of dollars a year on the Range. They are investing to make money ... you don't keep running without investing," Sen. Bakk said.

"I worry about jobs and production if this program is not in place," said Sen. Tomassoni.

The board did reach a consensus to review the program and its distribu-tion process.

"I think we can find a happy me-dium," Tomassoni said.



### IRRRB Governance:

The future direction of the agency's management will likely be voted on by the current board in June, with legislative action, if needed, pushed through this session, Commissioner Sertich said at the January IRRRB meeting.

"One thing I know for sure is that if



MARK SAUER/MESABI DAILY NEWS  
**Tony Sertich is IRRRB commissioner.**

we keep the status quo, it will eventu-ally be raided," Sertich said at the meeting.

He was referring to what had happened a couple years ago when Republican legislative majorities tried to secure money from the Douglas J. Johnson Fund.

The millions of dollars in the DJJ Fund is courted often by Republicans and even some DFLers of both politi-cal parties in St. Paul, especially when the state has budget deficits.

And the argument by Range legisla-tors and officials that those dollars are local property taxes does not easily break through the din of the State Capitol.

Former DFL state Sen. Ron Dick-lich, who was chairman of the task force on IRRRB governance altera-tions, said the political landscape in St. Paul fluctuates.

"We have no fear now, but that can change," he said, referring to DFL Gov. Mark Dayton and DFL control of both chambers in the Legislature.

Here's a snapshot look at the two recommendations of the task force; expect a composite final decision:

### Option A:

- A regional governmental entity would be governed by a board of leg-islators, who represent districts where one-third or more of the residents live within the Taconite Assistance Area.

- The board would hire and evalu-ate the agency's chief executive (currently, the commissioner); set the taconite production rate; and give final approval to the agency's budgets.

- The board would retain some current responsibilities, including ap-proval of projects and managing the DJJ Fund.

- The board would be accountable to the electorate in each legislative district, while the chief executive would report to the board.

### Option B:

- IRRRB would remain a state agency governed by a board of leg-islators who represent districts where one-third or more of the residents live within the Taconite Assistance Area.

- The board would still approve the agency's budget. However, economic development decisions would be made by a new board overseeing the

### DJJ Fund.

- The IRRRB would OK a contract with the DJJ Fund and determine the amount of additional allocations to the fund.

- The IRRR Board members would remain accountable to the elector-ate in each legislative district and the commissioner accountable to the governor.

- The DJJ Fund would be a separate non-governmental entity such as a 501(c) 3 nonprofit or an economic development authority.

- The fund would be governed by a board from within the Taconite Assis-tance Area and would have an IRRRB liaison.

- The DJJ Fund board would hire and evaluate the chief executive, set policy and direction and approve projects.

- The DJJ Fund board would be accountable to the IRRRB through a contract and be subject to the IRRRB's approval of continued replenishment of its corpus from mining production tax proceeds.

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# WOMEN

FROM PAGE 30

position within the organization.

"I'm also proud to see that we have another voice which parallels a lot of different groups already doing outreach in the community. This hits home with me, no doubt," he said. "... This will open avenues for my daughter, and possibly other daughters, some day down the road."

Through CWC, McGregor said she's learned that she's not alone.

"Everybody seems to have the same issue, and it's not just me," she said. "We can be afraid to ask, oh my gosh, it's not just me."

And it doesn't matter what site one is at, the concerns are similar.

"Just think that if we can start with some of these smaller issues, we could resolve a lot more Cliffs wide," McGregor said.

The group has reaffirmed the power of networking and bringing people together, Varichak said.

"When you start hearing about how others feel, you become more comfortable about bringing issues to the table," she said. "It also gives us the ability to find out who and what else is out there."

And for many, the CWC group provides a new avenue that is allowing them to take new steps.

"Some were afraid to say something, but then they said it and it's no big deal. They took that first step, and that's exciting for people who are shy or afraid to speak up," Varichak said. "To see that

fear kind of go away and see them willing to take that first step is huge. It has unlimited potential — not just at work but in their personal life too."

Varichak noted that two women on the CWC Committee will soon be featured in a global video for Cliffs in the near future. That opportunity came via networking.

"Getting what we do out there is really exciting," she added. "Without this group, those bonds might not have been there. Having that opportunity to include people in opportunities has been the best part for me."

Helms enjoys the team building aspect of CWC. Most of that is done during the volunteer and outreach activities, which is often when they pull in the men.

"This is not a women's advancement initiative. It's not all about girl power," she said. "It's important that it's a team building thing — not just a women's thing."

She stressed that she never felt unheard prior to becoming part of CWC.

"However, I think the group formalizes an avenue for someone if they ever did feel that way," Helms said. "It gives them a formal place to go."

Seeing the support and buy in — from the general managers on down — has been fun, Karnowski said.

"People are starting to read them — men and women, manager roles and all areas of the company — and applying what they are reading in the book and learning in this group to their every day activities," she said. "We are starting those 'ah-ha' moments. It's only been a year, but to see that happening tells me

that we were all looking for something like this for awhile."

Lubben concurred.

"We have a growing female workforce, and all of us are proud of that," he said. "This is bringing awareness to the leaders of the company, and helps us make more educated decisions in our approaches to hiring, designing our facilities and accommodations we create for all employees."

He pointed out that CWC discussions have led to some of the mines' dry facilities being altered to accommodate for the unique challenges a female employee experience over a male employee.

Varichak said she's proud of Cliffs as a company for embracing the Lean In philosophy.

"And for giving us the leeway and creative control to make this group what people want it to be. It takes a lot of trust to afford this time to allow us to do this during the workday and to be able to personally develop these networks to do this outreach," she said.

"There is the piece about being heard, but this is a step beyond it. It's empowerment, and we are powered to be able to continue to make a difference."

Not everyone is buying into the concept.

McGregor admits that she's overheard some rumbles, she adds that she chalks it up to not understanding the CWC's objectives.

To be fair, you don't know what you don't know, said Varichak.

"It's for us to bring up issues, concerns, potential changes and improve-



MARK SAUER/MESABI DAILY NEWS

Tara Helms joins other Cliffs employees in volunteering at the United Way Buddy Backpack program in Chisholm.

ments, whatever the case may be," she said. "We can't expect our male counterparts and primarily our managers to be able to read our minds and know what we need or how things might be improved. This is about our 50 percent."

CWC is about how to make change in the workplace, in the industry and the community.

"It's not so much about what's happening to us, but about how we can make our workplace — a place we are proud to work in — a better place for us and the next generation," said Varichak. "It's not about what we haven't gotten or what we wanted. We just might not have asked. Now we are starting to create a voice for ourselves and they are listening. It's a great partnership."

It's not women power, they added. It women empowerment.

"The women in this group don't want to be viewed that way," Kar-

nowski said. "They are just trying to help out and empower other women to come forward."

Participation in CWC is voluntary, and it isn't all women at Cliffs, noted Varichak.

"This isn't mandatory by any means," she added. "This is for everyone, and it's important to recognize that everyone has different opinions and different approaches. This type of group does not fit everyone, and we've gotten some feedback on that."

The true beauty of it is how it's provided a structure and model for other types of groups to form, such as working parents or generational splits, Varichak said.

"Hopefully this (CWC) is just one of many things that can be rolled out at Cliffs that can provide this type of networking," she added. "This provides the framework to grow and continue to provide the employee resources groups. We are just one

group within Cliffs."

And CWC is about inclusivity, not exclusivity, she stressed.

Lubben agreed, adding that he believes it will benefit the whole workforce.

"At the core of this group is driving home the message — not only to female employees but what should resonate with all employees — to think about your work life balance, the quality of your job, the quality of your surroundings and professional advancement. There will be relationships growing out of this, and not only female to female but to all employees," he said.

"It's getting out the awareness that professional development is a true value of the whole organization, and we're trying to open up all kinds of doors to think about their futures and find those avenues. The message resonates with me as a male employee too."



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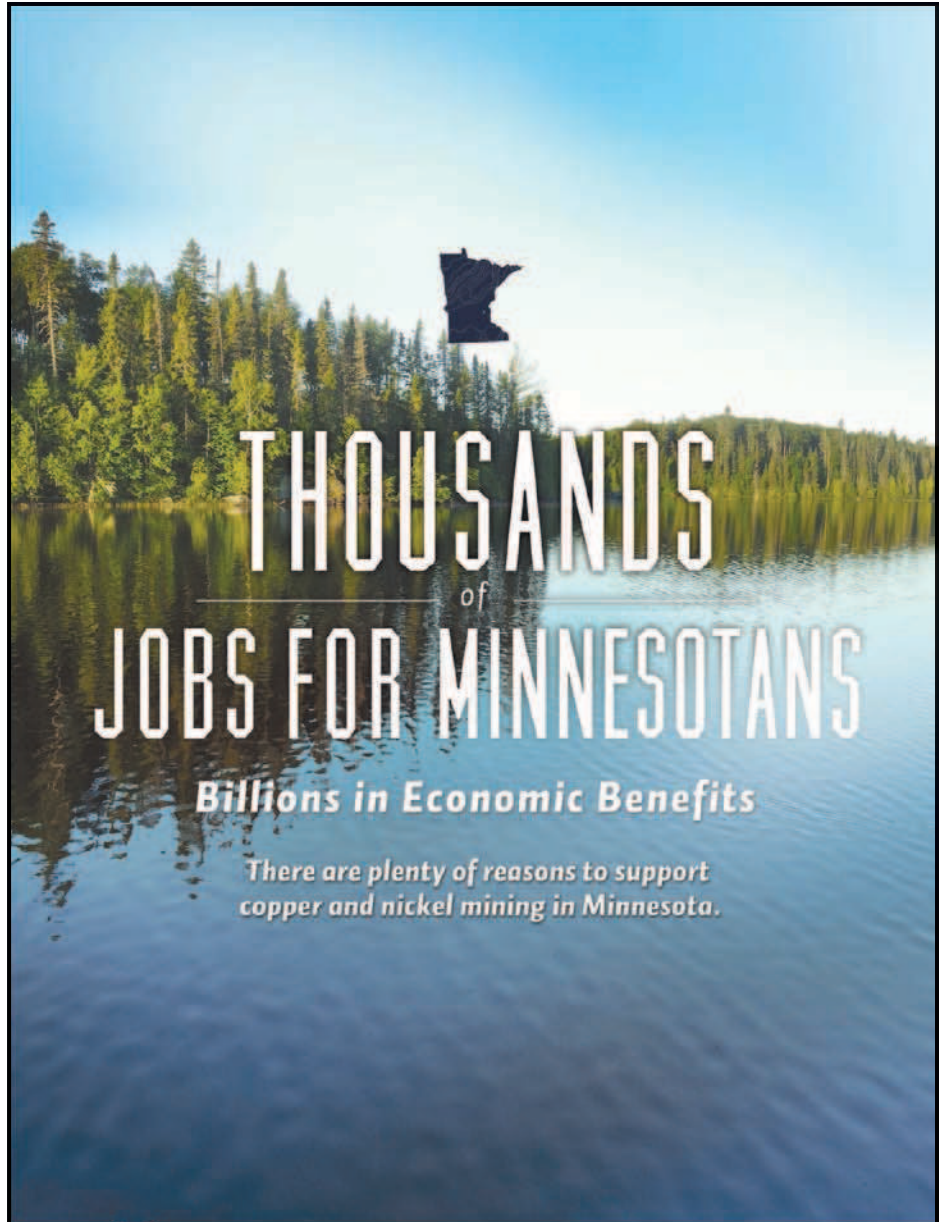
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# GIVING BACK

## Cliffs Resources, employees pay it forward

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educational partnerships."

Since early in Cliffs Natural Resources' history, giving back to communities in which the company has business operations has been a priority — and it's a practice that continues today.

Knowing that the company's success is tied to the long-term well-being of its employees and the surrounding communities, Cliffs actively engages with its neighbors through contributions to community organizations, projects and schools.

"We collaborate with local groups, schools, educational institutions, regulators and our employees to create meaningful partnerships that sustain our operations and enhance local communities," said Sandy Karnowski, Cliffs' district manager of public affairs. "Cliffs also encourages employees to engage in our communities through volunteer activities and

The company's community investments focus on the areas of safety, health and wellness, culture and development and education. Contributions are made locally, through operation and corporate contributions as well as the company's charitable fund, The Cliffs Foundation.

The contributions, which are made year round, are to community organizations, sponsorships, school activities, scholarships, community projects and educational programs, among others.

In 2013, Cliffs' three Minnesota mines made significant donations to their communities. Outside of employee matching funds to the United Way, Hibbing Taconite gave \$14,769, United Taconite gave \$13,695 and Northshore Mining gave \$36,259. That totals: \$64,723.

That giving back, combined with contributions from the Cliffs Foundation, has led to countless



Sandy Karnowski, Cliffs Resources district manager of public affairs, at right, presents members of the Babbitt Lion's Club members, from left, Donna Muellerleile, Marilyn Kapscha and Joe Sherman a \$22,000 check from the Cliffs Foundation to upgrade playground equipment. The playground is one of 22 projects or entities that received funds from the Cliffs Foundation.

positive stories. "The most rewarding part of making financial contributions is seeing the impact they have on

our communities," said Karnowski. "In recent years, Cliffs' contributions have helped bring the Smiles Across Min-

nesota program to area schools. We've seen homes built for families through Habitat for Humanity, the United

Way's Buddy Backpack Program has provided nutritional food to children in need, Range

SUBMITTED

SEE GIVING, PAGE 33

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# GIVING

FROM PAGE 32

Mental Health Center has expanded its Merritt House to better serve women diagnosed with mental health disease, the St. Louis County Rescue Squad has purchased life-saving equipment."

But even the small donations have big meaning.

Hibbing Taconite donated 57 computer devices to local schools in November. The contribution was made after Hibbing Taconite upgraded some of its computer equipment earlier this year.

The schools that received the donations were Victory Christian Academy in Hibbing and Vermilion Country Charter School in Tower. The contribution included computers, printers, monitors and other equipment to support the schools' technology needs.

"The computers from Hibbing Taconite have a greater capacity and capabilities in order for the students

to utilize all the wonderful educational tools available online," said Kristyn Sinnott, Victory Christian Academy teacher. "We are truly grateful for this wonderful gift."

Hibbing Taconite, United Taconite and Northshore Mining have donated a combined total of more than 180 computer devices to area schools since 2011.

Cliffs' employees also volunteer their time for classroom activities, which include hands-on learning about the mining industry, tours of our operations for the community and students, and they are involved in many community activities and boards. Those activities are also year round.

"Cliffs believes our success is tied to the long-term well-being of our employees and communities, so we encourage our employees to be engaged in their communities by providing resources and incentives to show our support for their activities," said Karnowski.

SEE GIVING, PAGE 34



SUBMITTED

Sandy Karnowski, Cliffs Resources district manager of public affairs, left, presents a check to Erin Shay, resource and marketing director of the United Way of Northeastern Minnesota.



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# GIVING

FROM PAGE 33

## 'United' in giving back

One of the biggest beneficiaries of the Cliffs' and its employees' generosity is the United Way — both the Range-based United of Northeastern Minnesota (UWNEMN) and the Duluth Area United Way.

"The United Way and Cliffs Natural Resources have a deep history in Cleveland and have maintained a long-standing partnership in support of organizations that are committed to providing education, income and health to create better communities for all," said Karnowski.

Cliffs' employees pledged \$283,995 to the 2013-2014 United Way campaigns. The company provides a match of 50 percent of the amount pledged, so the total amount contributed and pledged to the United Way is \$433,187.

"We appreciate Cliffs as a supporter of United Way of Northeastern Minnesota at all levels," said Shelley Valentini, executive director of UWNEMN.

"The generosity of their employees and the Cliffs Foundation has made a tremendous positive impact in our communities and helps UWNEMN carry out our mission of improving lives and strengthen-

ing families on the Iron Range."

Employees have the option to have their contributions deducted from their paychecks or they can make a direct contribution to the United Way.

"It's also important to acknowledge the United Steelworkers Union for their strong partnership with Cliffs and support of our annual United Way fundraising drive," said Karnowski. "We are united in our support for the United Way and the union's involvement is a significant contributor to the campaign's success."

In addition to Cliffs' support for the annual pledge drive, the mines have provided \$4,250 in local sponsorships for United Way activities, and \$7,344 in contributions have been made through the Cliffs Foundation. That means Cliffs' total 2013-2014 contribution to the UWNEMN and Duluth Area United Way is more than \$444,000.

Cliffs has also provided matching contributions, made large donations and encouraged employees to contribute towards disaster response efforts for tragedies like Hurricane Sandy, the typhoon in the Philippines, and flood relief in Duluth.

"It is not only the monetary support that is so valuable, but the employees have also volunteered their time



Victory Christian Academy students utilize donated computers from Hibbing Taconite.

SUBMITTED

in many ways to further the work of the United Way," said Valentini. "The entire Cliffs family is a great partner in making critical positive changes for those in need."

Donations to the UWNEMN and Duluth Area United Way stay local and help to fund various local non-profit organizations' programs throughout the year.

"This is just another example of how committed our employees are to their communities," said Karnowski.

"The United Way is an excellent organization that provides financial support and programs to non-profit groups in the areas that surround our operations, so we are pleased that our employees choose to support their efforts in a big way year after year."

### A 'Foundation' of giving

Cliffs strives to make a difference in its business communities through social investment from facility-based discretionary giving, corporate contributions and its corporate charitable fund, The Cliffs Foundation. Budgets are managed at the local level with input from employees, Cliffs' stakeholders

who know the company's business communities best.

Formed in 1962, the Cliffs Foundation (formerly The Cleveland-Cliffs Foundation) was established to support the company's charitable giving endeavors in its mine communities.

Today, the Foundation's areas of focus are education and community building, and providing support to non-profit organizations whose services enhance quality of life in Cliffs' business communities.

In 2013, the Cliffs Foundation made a contribution totalling \$209,200 to 16 projects and organizations in Northeastern Min-

nesota. This year, Cliffs recently announced it will be making financial contributions totaling \$271,800 to 22 projects and organizations.

"Cliffs Natural Resources has maintained its long-term commitment to the communities in which it operates through significant contributions from the mine operations and the Cliffs Foundation," said Karnowski. "We are continually impressed by the quality of projects that are proposed by organizations in our communities, and look forward to seeing the 2014 initiatives that have received Cliffs' support come to life."

## UNITED TACONITE



### 2014 CLIFFS FOUNDATION CONTRIBUTIONS, PLEDGES:

#### NEW 2014 CONTRIBUTIONS

- Hibbing Salvation Army Rental Assistance Program: \$50,000 (\$10,000/year over 5 years)
- Range Mental Health Center ADAPT Program: \$25,000 (\$5,000/year over 5 years)
- Babbitt Playground Equipment: \$22,000
- Volunteers in Education Tutor Program: \$20,000 (\$10,000/year over 2 years)
- Minnesota Discovery Center Mobile Mining Exhibit: \$18,000
- Michigan Tech Mindtrekkers Program: \$10,000
- Friends of the Two Harbors Library Renovation: \$10,000
- Northern Lights Community School Greenhouse: \$10,000
- St. Louis County Historical Society Veterans Memorial Hall: \$10,000 (\$5,000/year over 2 years)
- Advocates for Family Peace(Domestic Violence Programs): \$7,500
- Northern Lake County Arts Program: \$5,000
- Iron Range Project Care Free Clinic: \$5,000
- Two Harbors Robotics Team: \$5,000
- Northwoods Hospice Memory Care Program: \$2,500
- Schroeder Historical Society Native American Exhibit: \$2,500
- Mesabi Symphony Orchestra: \$1,500

#### MULTI-YEAR ONGOING PLEDGES:

- Eveleth Area Community Foundation: \$10,000
- Northern St. Louis County Habitat for Humanity: \$10,000
- Ely Blue Line Club Arena Improvements: \$5,000
- Range Mental Health Center Merritt House Wing Expansion: \$5,000
- Silver Bay Blue Line Club Arena Improvements: \$5,000
- Minnesota Discovery Center Archival Project: \$4,000

\* In addition, the Foundation provides annual support for several local organizations totaling \$103,800.



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**GUEST COLUMN**

**MARK SKELTON**

Hoyt Lakes Mayor

# Time to see and hear children playing again in town



MARK SAUER/MESABI DAILY NEWS

Hoyt Lakes Mayor Mark Skelton talks about the potential economic impact of the PolyMet precious metals mine being developed near Hoyt Lakes during a public comment session in January for the company's Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement at the Mesabi East High School in Aurora. More than 700 people attended the meeting, which was co-chaired by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Forest Service.

My name is Mark Skelton and I am the current mayor of the city of Hoyt Lakes.

As most everyone knows, there has been quite a debate in the past nine years over the mining of precious metals out of the Duluth Complex, which is located at the east end of the Iron Range.

Not long ago the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources released the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) for the PoyMet or NorthMet project. This SDEIS contains nine years, 2,200 pages and approximately \$70 million of science, engineering and research on this project.

I admit that I have no expertise in the area of precious metal mining, but I do have the utmost confidence in the employees working for our governmental agencies who put this

SDEIS together, as well as confidence in our regulatory agencies that will continue to monitor this project. There is one portion of this SDEIS that I feel I do have some expertise on and that is the socioeconomics of this area, mainly because I have lived it for most of my life.

I was born in Hibbing and during my elementary school years I lived in a neighborhood that was built for the mining industry. My father worked for the St. Louis County Public Works Department and I can remember when times were good in the mines because every house in our neighborhood was occupied with families living in them. I also remember when times were not so good and every home in our neighborhood was empty except for ours. I can remember how scary it was as a young boy walking to school past all of the

empty homes that used to house my friends.

In 1977 my wife Kathy and I moved from Duluth to Hoyt Lakes, after being offered one of those mining spin-off jobs working in a retail chain store. What a community for a newly married couple to move into and start raising a family. Hoyt Lakes, a young community built in the 1950s because of new technologies in mining called taconite mining. Hoyt Lakes had two elementary schools, a hockey arena as well as a number of outdoor skating rinks throughout town. There were playgrounds, tennis courts, baseball fields, a beach, golf course and even a go-kart track. There were two lakes for fishing, picnicking and recreating. Best of all, there were children, all kinds of children who filled our schools and all of the venues listed above. When my wife

and I began raising our two sons, it was not uncommon to count more than 50 children at a time playing in our front yard.

When we moved to Hoyt Lakes, the population was close to 4,000 residents. Because Hoyt Lakes was a model city of the 1950s, the business district was built as a strip mall which housed more than 20 retail businesses in and around the mall area. In 1977, a person did not have to leave town to do any of their retail shopping if they did not wish to.

Throughout the years we lived the ups and downs of a mining town, but in 2001 we were given the devastating news that our taconite mine and processing plant would be shuttered. The result of that closure has had a profound impact on our city. The current population stands at

SEE SKELTON PAGE 36



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# SKELTON

FROM PAGE 35

approximately 2000 residents. Our two elementary schools have been closed. Our business district has just a few retail businesses left, which have struggled for years to keep their doors open.

As devastating as this event was for the city of Hoyt Lakes, it has had a greater impact on our region. According to the SDEIS mentioned above, our region has suffered a loss of 23,000 residents since 1980. That is a 10 percent decrease in our population compared to a 30 percent increase in the same time period for the state of Minnesota. The demographics of our area show that our average age is older than the rest of the state and has fewer middle age adults and fewer children than the rest of the state of Minnesota.

In the past month, I have had the opportunity to attend the three public forums that are part of the permit-

ting process. One of the things most noticeable to me throughout this process has been the respect given to each other during this comment period. Whether you are for or against this project, people treated each other with civility. I'm not so sure this could have happened in other regions of the world.

One of the reoccurring comments from those opposed to this project was that the East Range needed to think outside the box and diversify our economy. With all due respect to those comments, I would have to ask them where they have been?

We have a State agency on the Range called the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board that is funded through taconite production taxes in lieu of property taxes. This agency has a group of professionals that has been working on economic development for decades. On the East Range, the cities of Aurora, Biwabik, Hoyt Lakes and White Township fund an economic development agency called the East Range Joint Pow-

ers, which also employs a full-time economic developer. The City of Hoyt Lakes hosts an industrial park that has just about any amenity a company would need as well as a development team consisting of some of the most intelligent individuals I have ever had the opportunity to work with in economic development. I spent 10 years as the police chief in Gilbert and know first-hand the work that the cities of Gilbert, Eveleth, Virginia, and Mountain Iron have been putting into economic development.

It's pretty easy to stand in front of people and say think outside the box when it would be just as easy to look at a map of the state of Minnesota and the geographical location of the Iron Range to see some of the hurdles we face in the diversification of our economy.

The good news is that we have an opportunity to begin that diversification of our Range economy with PolyMet Mining. It has been nine years since this SDEIS has begun. The scientists, engineers, foresters, and

specialists, have been working on this document to make sure that this mining can be done in a way that is safe for our environment.

This new era of mining will have government regulators monitoring this process throughout its duration. This project not only gives me hope for my city and our region from an economic diversification standpoint, but more importantly it gives me hope as a member of the human race. We are about to embark on a new era of mining the minerals that are so important to our existence as human beings here on this earth. Yes, we are going to do this in our backyard so that we can make sure it is done right.

I look forward to the day when I can look out into my front yard and see and hear the children playing once again and have the peace of mind that they will have the opportunity when they grow up to stay and work in a region where they were born and raised in and hopefully have grown to love as much as I have.

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# Ernie Lehmann: 1929-2013



Ernie Lehmann is shown during his early mining days in Montana in the 1950s.

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# GEOLOGY JIGSAW MASTER

## A life and career devoted to all aspects of mining all over the world

**BILL HANNA**  
MESABI DAILY NEWS

Ernie Lehmann thrilled in the mining hunt, whether it was riding mules in Argentina or drilling for gold on the Range.

In that way he was a throwback, old-time prospector for 63 years.

But he also marveled at modern technology that allowed him to become even more proficient at being a geology jigsaw master.

And he loved the mineral deposits of the Iron Range, where he left behind a big footprint that remains part of his calculated risk-taking legacy.

"There is no substitute for a geologist who can really take all of the technical information and bring an artistry to interpreting it all. He was like an artist ... he saw all the pieces," Ernie Lehmann's daughter and business partner, Kate, said in a recent telephone interview.

Ernie died on Dec. 13, 2013, at his home in Minneapolis. He was 84.

Born in Heidelberg, Germany, in 1929, he immigrated to the United States in 1935 with his parents and two brothers.

Ernie's career began in 1950 as a miner and geologist at a gold mine in Bannack, Mont.

A year later he would take a job with Kennecott Cop-

per, based in Arlington, Va. Following a two-year stint with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, he returned to Kennecott and started exploring for copper on Minnesota's Iron Range. It would prove to be a lifelong relationship between Ernie and precious metals in the ground waiting to be extracted in the North Star state to then be put to good use.

Ernie and his family — he married Sally Willius of St. Paul in 1953 — relocated to Sally's native state in 1957 to make their home for the rest of his life in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area. They would have four children — Fred, Kate, Charlotte and Walter.

He left Kennecott in 1958 and set out on his own, creating an independent geological consulting practice at the age of 29.

His accomplishments during an adventurous life as a mining businessman were extensive:

- He worked in North and South America, Africa and Europe for mining companies, private investors, land owners and private and international financial institutions.
- He led the discovery of significant ore deposits, including 1 million ounce-plus gold deposits in Montana and Argentina.
- He was a major contributor to the exploration and development of the copper/nickel/precious metals



SEE LEHMANN, PAGE 39 Ernie Lehmann and his daughter, Kate, in a summer 2012 photo.



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# LEHMANN

FROM PAGE 37

deposits in the Duluth Complex of northeastern Minnesota, which includes the Iron Range.

- He helped establish Mining Minnesota.
- He testified before Congress and the Minnesota Legislature on mining issues.
- He received the Ben H. Parker Memorial medal from the American Institute of Professional Geologists; and the Ben F. Dickerson award from the Society for Mining, Metallurgy and Exploration.

"He was a delightful business partner," said Dick Backstrom of IDEA Drilling in Virginia. "We worked together in Montana in the mid-1980s. We later had a project in Argentina and rode mules in the high country."

Backstrom said Ernie told him he was uncertain of what he would do with his life until a college professor stirred his passion for geology and mining.

"The story he told me was that he had no idea what he would do while in school. But he liked a geologist professor ... and his dad was an archeologist," Backstrom said.

Ernie would graduate from Williams College with highest honors in 1951 and did further studies at Brown University from 1951-52. In 1984, he completed the Owners and Presidents Management Program at the Harvard Business School.

"He was just a great guy," Backstrom said.

That thought is echoed by former state Sen. Doug Johnson of Tower, who worked with Ernie on job development on the Range.

"Ernie Lehmann was an early pioneer in seeing the

economic opportunities for non-ferrous mining on the Range. I met him in the early 1980s when I was in the (state) Senate. We worked together on several pieces of legislation and became good friends.

"After I retired he hired me to do consulting work for Franconia, which is now part of the Twin Metals project. He was a great boss who was honest, loyal and dedicated. He was a great friend of the Range," Johnson said.

Kate said she has fond childhood memories of family journeys with her geologist/miner dad.

"I remember car trips going west a few times as a little girl. A gold pan and a pick would be with us in the car. I panned for gold as a child on one trip to the Dakotas in the Black Hills and also to Wyoming," she said.

And later, when in her early-teens, Kate recalls going rock climbing in the Grand Tetons (in Wyoming) with her dad and brother.

"I was impressed with my father. On other things, such as ski lessons, he didn't participate. But he did rock climbing," she said.

Kate would later watch her dad more closely as he handled the ups and downs, intricacies and often quirky nuances of the mining business. He had a number of mining-related ventures under the umbrella of North Central Mineral Ventures Inc.

"About 12 years ago he asked me if I would come to work with him. I thought about it for a while because my background was as a producer in film and TV. But I came aboard ... started in accounting and financial and then land strategy and pretty soon the whole business strategy.

"Over time I got a pretty good grasp of what we are doing. I think I can carry on without much of a hitch. It's pretty fascinating and has complex and interesting parts to it," Kate said.

The Lehmann company is still involved on the Range with Vermilion Gold, which had a strong hold on Ernie right up to his death, Kate said.

"The most promising areas are the Virginia Horn, near the city of Virginia between Virginia and Biwabik. It is the most active of a couple other targets. We've done some drilling and hope to get a little more drilling done soon.

"There's also Lost Lake in Itasca County and a couple other targets of some interest to other companies, too," she said.

So what were the driving forces that built up and stored so much personal energy for Ernie during a life well-lived and one where he never retired from a job that was a passion, and certainly not a chore in any way?

"It was about solving puzzles; intricate problems. He was curious and liked feeling that he was contributing to the rest of the world.

"He liked the process. And he also really liked teaching people. It was really important to him to bring talented people into the industry," Kate said.

Ernie was proud that the mining industry, including exploration, provided good jobs and essential commodities for everyday life, his daughter said. "And he wanted things done in a responsible way. In many ways he was an environmentalist ... but would never call himself that."

Kate said she grew to admire her father even more while working alongside him.

"He went through a lot of



SUBMITTED

**Ernie Lehmann had a long and impressive career as a miner and geologist, including exploration ventures on the Iron Range. He died in December 2013. He was 84 years old.**

business ups and downs, but I didn't really appreciate how he handled it all. He was always so optimistic and always looked to things getting better.

"He went through some bad periods financially when he had a firm of 40 people. There was a bad turn and some big clients were lost. His business was all but imploding. And the last thing he wanted to do was lay people off. That's what hurt him the most ... it was very painful.

"But at no time did he think of getting out of the business. He remained upbeat," she said.

And Ernie's interest in all things mining never waned,

even as his health did towards the end of 2013 when he was weakened by a heart infection.

"I was consulting with him on a variety of business decisions right up to the end. And he was adamant that I get him a printed copy of the PolyMet SDEIS (supplemental draft environmental impact statement). Against my better judgment, I said OK. But by the time it came out he was too sick then," Kate said.

However, it's easy to believe that he somehow got a copy of the 2,200-page document and is reading it now in the hereafter.

# General Waste



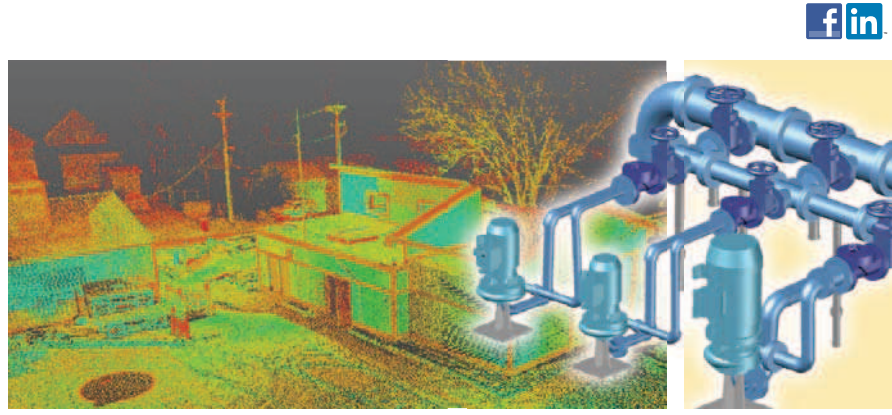
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# Iron Range Engineering — growing wealth in region

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GRAND RAPIDS  
HERALD-REVIEW

It's a world-class higher education program that is not only creating highly-skilled engineers ready to bring the mining industry into the future but it is also growing wealth throughout the Iron Range.

A distinctive, undergraduate project-based learning program, Iron Range Engineering (IRE) is a collaboration between Itasca Community College in Grand Rapids and Minnesota State Mankato (MSU). Another key partner of the program is actual industry.

Almost like the local farmer who supplies locally-grown produce to local restaurants, IRE supplies local mining, milling and manufacturing companies locally-trained workers ready to finish all types of projects.

Unlike traditional college students, IRE students don't spend the last four semesters of the upper-division of their education with their noses in books nor in long, lecture-based classes. According to ICC and IRE instructor Ron Ulseth who developed the program, his students work in teams to solve "complex and ill-structured problems

associated with regional industry" in need of engineers.

"All of their learning activities are organized by and associated with these industry projects," explained Ulseth.

IRE students can be assured that the education and experience they earn is top in the field as the program is accredited through ABET, the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, the world leader in assuring quality and stimulating innovation in engineering and engineering education.

At the end of the two-year program, graduates earn a bachelor of science degree from MSU with emphases such as mechanical and/or electrical engineering.

"True to the intent of ABET student outcomes and the attributes of 'The Engineer of 2020,' graduates emerge from the IRE program with integrated technical and professional knowledge and competencies," added Ulseth. "The IRE model addresses the how of student learning in engineering while allowing for deeper integration of the what, the technical content merged with professionalism and design skills needed for successful careers."

Ulseth explained that the IRE model has

students learning the technical information at the same time they are executing engineering design projects. During the initial proposal stage, students work with faculty and industry clients to develop two plans - a work plan which details the entire execution of the project which will be presented to the client; and a learning plan which addresses professional learning objectives, technical learning objectives and the learning modes that will be used to meet the objectives.

According to Ulseth, students divide their time every week between learning by doing the design and learning through methods that include self-learning, peer-learning and learning from faculty and other external expert while the majority of the learning is experimental and done in the context of design.

"Students learn, practice and receive feedback on professionalism, design, creativity and innovation throughout the four-semester curriculum."

IRE students even plan for their own summary assessment of the project process and reflection of their work. In the end, the students present their plan to faculty and faculty test students through

oral exam.

"As students work on their projects they learn the fundamentals of project management and product development," said Ulseth as he explained that after four semesters and four projects, the students are able to jump into a project management situation presented by an employer or are equally ready to attempt work on a project of their own.

Many IRE students already have a strong foundation built even before they graduate from high school. Programs like Project Lead the Way at Grand Rapids High School provide an alternative to general science classes with special STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) curriculum to introduce students to engineering studies. By offering programs like these, students who may have never considered engineering get the opportunity to explore the possibility of following a path that feeds smoothly into the engineering program at ICC.

Designed with similar desired outcomes as IRE, the two-year beginning program at ICC is project-based with students working on real community projects each semester. ICC's

program, also developed in-part by Ulseth, features a model that works from the ground up with strong K-12 relationships, an active student/faculty learning community and flexible academic pathways for differing student development. Ulseth and ICC program coordinator Bart Johnson have authored and published several papers on ICC's engineering learning model which have been distributed at various conferences throughout the world.

"We're focused on not just helping students transfer (to a four-year school), but to be successful in their careers," said Johnson of the program he describes as a "world-class model."

Like IRE, ICC's program allows students to expand their knowledge as they go with extensive access to real professional practice, as Johnson has explained. "They are learning engineering as they are doing engineering."

By guiding and preparing students for the next transition in their path toward a career in engineering, ICC has achieved a success rate that matches or exceeds that of four-year institutions for producing engineers that follow their degree through graduation.

Averaging 90 freshman a year, ICC Engineering offers all courses engineering students would take their first two years at any other school, plus some junior-level courses. So when students transfer from ICC, they are ready to complete their degree in two years.

"We've established the tools here to help students stay on track," added Johnson.

And should students follow this path to IRE, their chances of staying on a track to a job are good.

In 2011-2012, IRE's first 21 students graduated and 16 of those found employment regionally, four were hired outside the region and one was accepted to Notre Dame University for graduate studies in biomedical engineering. In 2013, 20 additional students graduated. In his 2012 State of the State speech, Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton applauded IRE and Ulseth's work to develop the unique program which is helping students get hired on the Range, growing wealth and boosting the economy.

For more information about IRE, visit [www.ire.mnscu.edu](http://www.ire.mnscu.edu).



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State Sen. David Tomassoni, DFL-Chisholm, is a strong supporter of the proposed PolyMet copper/nickel/precious metals mine near Hoyt Lakes. He attended the recent public hearings on the project's supplemental draft environmental impact statement.

MARK SAUER  
MESABI DAILY NEWS



GUEST COLUMN

DAVID  
TOMASSONI  
6th District DFL Senator

'Mining is us. We are what we mine.'

Two thousand one hundred sixty nine (2169) pages is the size of the PolyMet draft SDEIS, with more than \$80 million spent, and more than eight years developing it making it comprehensive and complete — but the mine is not yet operational.

After more than 125 years of iron ore mining on the Range, one would have to ask, "What don't we know about mining that hasn't been learned in the last 125 years."

I maintain that there is very little we don't know, but in our overly cautious and litigious world, this has become the norm in Minnesota.

In fact, high-cost modeling and time-consuming permitting has been spilling over to the iron mining industry, making normal everyday mining seemingly questionable.

Now, it is fair to say that PolyMet is copper mining and not iron ore mining. It is fair to say that we must make sure that we get it right from the get-go. It is also fair to say we all want to protect our water and air; and our laws do require that we go through a very thorough process, yet it all seems excessive.

To ensure the process is being done in a transparent way and according to law, PolyMet has complied with our rigorous laws at every turn — so all the T's are crossed, all the I's are dotted and no stone is left unturned.

There are seven different federal and state agencies involved in the environmental review process. They have gone the extra mile to make sure that more, not less, is done, i.e., the original draft EIS was sent back for further review and updating; the comment period on SDEIS was almost doubled from the mandatory 51 days to 90 days; and three public

hearings were held for people to make oral comments, triple what is required by law; and oh, did I mention 2,169 pages.

As a result of all the rigor involved with the environmental assessment in the permit to mine process, we can be sure the mining will be done right.

Upwards of 1,000 construction jobs, 366 full-time jobs and at least twice as many spin-off jobs are anticipated. PolyMet will be recycling the old LTV processing plant in Hoyt Lakes, utilizing and upgrading the former taconite plant to meet the needs of the new operation. The minerals that will be mined are not only plentiful in the deposit but are widely utilized by all of us in our day to day life.

Mining has been an integral part of the Iron Range ever since the 1890s. Our immigrant history is unique to our area as the Iron Range became a melting pot of many different nationalities, bringing their own traditions and specialties to this area.

Hard-working, hard-playing people had mining as their common thread as thousands worked in the mines. Most of them lived in one of the many locations that sprang up near the mines. These locations were built by the mining companies mainly to house the miners and their families, but they also served the company's desire to control the workforce. Workers ultimately formed strong unions, which fostered safe working conditions and equitable compensation.

My own life has been heavily influenced by mining as my dad started working for the Hanna Mining Co. as a mechanical engineer when I was about 5. He worked there for 22 years, but due to a down

turn in the economy, he suffered the fate of many people on the Iron Range — a forced retirement.

Boom and bust economies have been the norm here. People have enjoyed the good life as a result of the mining industry, yet bankruptcies and downsizing have left many people without jobs or the pensions they expected and often forced people to leave the area to find new employment.

We were lucky. Chet was employed for 22 years straight and we had all kinds of things around the house that had, "Hanna Mining Co." on them. We got to see Twins, Vikings, Gopher and North Star games as a result of my dad's job. His pick-up truck, full of red ore, always left a chunk or two of ore in our driveway where the truck had been parked. During my college days, my summer jobs were at the mines. I worked on the wash down floor, put 10 pound balls into the balling mills, was an MM helper, and my favorite job.... dropping cars.

Mining makes the Iron Range what it is today, and its importance stretches around the world. Without mining there would be no roads, no bridges, no skyscrapers, no cars or trucks, no schools, no churches, no shopping malls, no hospitals and on and on. Two world wars were won as a result of Iron Range mining. The steel used to make our automobiles is made with our taconite pellets shipped from the ports of Duluth, Two Harbors and Silver Bay.

The industry has evolved before our eyes. From the original red ore and underground mines to open pit and taconite mining to Mesabi Nugget with 97 to 98 percent iron nuggets or to Magnetation's

reclaiming of tailings and reprocessing them for concentrate, new technologies keep the industry on the cutting edge.

In addition, Essar Steel is on the drawing board, while current mines are in the process of expanding. PolyMet and Twin Metals would add yet another dimension.

Some projections have as many as 200 more years of mining remaining.

Iron ore has been the staple but with these precious metals present in our "veins," we could begin to supply our country's needs for copper, nickel, platinum, palladium, gold and cobalt. Computers, cell phones, TV's, wind mills, solar panels, medical devices, catalytic converters, electric cars, copper pipes and wires and broadband are just a few examples of our "Green" economy's and our society's needs.

Instead of exporting our jobs to China and importing China's pollution, we would be mining these ores with environmentally

safe methods under the guidance of some of the stiffest laws in the world. Instead of 10-year-old kids doing the mining for 50 cents a weeks, this conflict-free mining would provide good paying jobs that support families with health care and pensions. The iron mining industry puts \$3.4 billion back into our economy in the way of wages, taxes, goods and services and more.

There are 4,200 direct jobs and more than 13,000 spin-off jobs. Our school and university trust funds are benefiting students across the state. Most of the current funds are a result of mining and there are several billion dollars worth of royalties still untapped.

The addition of precious metals mining will not only add jobs but also provide a domestic source of the minerals we already rely on for our "Green" economy, our medical industry, our defense industry and just about everything imaginable.

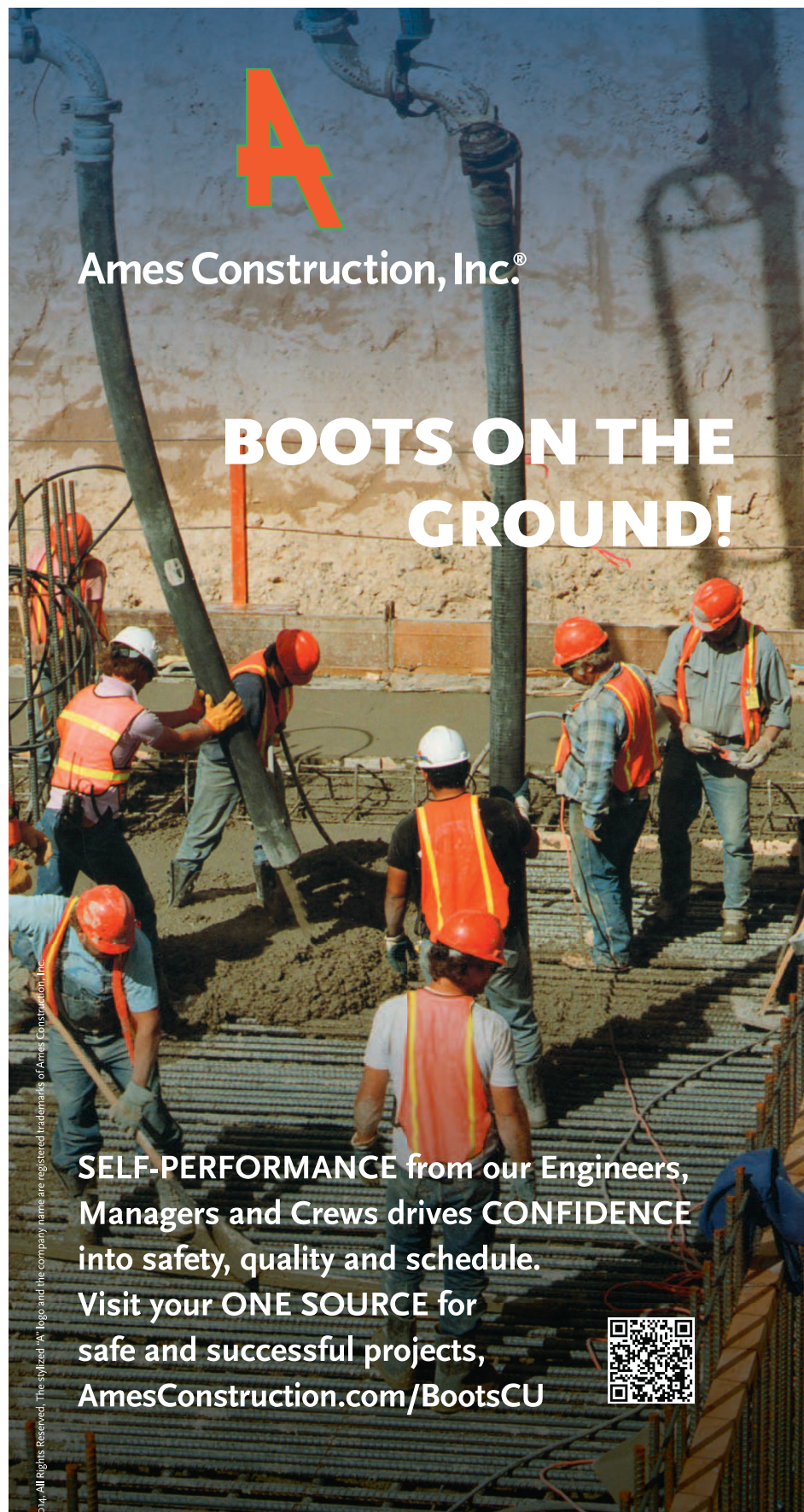
Mining is us. We know how to mine. We have been doing it for more

than a century. Our water is clean, our air is clean and we have some of the most passionate users of our lakes and forests living and working right here on the Range. People travel from all over the state and country to enjoy our playground. The environment and jobs have co-existed since the beginning of mining in Minnesota, and will continue to do so.

Someone has to mine. The world as we know it is dependent on that fact. It has to be done where the minerals are present. If not here, it will take place somewhere else undoubtedly to the detriment of children, a living wage, and most certainly to the detriment of the environment.

Mining is us — jobs, the economy, the environment, the Iron Range, the world. We are what we mine!

David Tomassoni is the 6th District DFL senator from Chisholm.



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# Lake Country Power also player in mining economy

**NATHAN BERGSTEDT**  
GRAND RAPIDS HERALD-REVIEW

Given the scope of the mining industry in northern Minnesota, and not just in terms of the size of the holes it makes in the ground, it should come as little surprise that there is hardly a sector of the community that isn't in some way influenced by the work being done in the mines. Businesses big and small are a part of the process, delivering goods and services that allow the mining industry to function in the way we recognize today.

Minnesota Power is the major supplier of electricity to the mines of the Iron Range. But as it turns out, they're not entirely alone in that business. Fellow power distributor, Lake Country Power, has been a player in the ever-developing industry for many years now. Whereas they haven't been the primary supplier of the electricity used to extract iron ore, like many other businesses, they are part of the intricate web of people and organizations that keep the economy across northern Minnesota in check. Together with their supplier, Great River Energy, Lake Country Power has met the energy needs of its members that both are directly related to the mining industry and those that are indirectly related.

Being a cooperative, each of the individuals and businesses that Lake Country serves are part owners in the organization, the same with Great

River Energy. Aside from the thousands of residential members, industrial members of the co-op include Ziegler CAT, Industrial Lubricant, and Nortrax Equipment.

"There's a couple of railroads too. We have a lot of services with Burlington Northern, for one," said Jeff Sheldon, manager of energy services and business development at Lake Country Power, when listing the various businesses served by the co-op. "And pipeline pumping stations; there's two compressor stations and a couple of well pumping stations that cut through our area."

Across the board, Lake Country Power has 32,000 industrial members throughout their service area. But all told, the cooperative came to the area relatively late. Other power companies began serving the area as early as the late 1800s; Lake Country Power was only formed in 1997. Even when taking into account the fact that it was formed out of three other electric cooperatives that had been around since 1936, they still weren't able to get in on the ground floor of the power needs of northeast Minnesota's largest industry.

"We also serve other businesses that provide services to the mines," said Mike Birkeland, director of member services and community relations for Lake Country Power. "Or, in some cases, we serve next-generation mining facilities. Magnetation would be one example, with their first

plant."

Besides simply supplying energy to Magnetation when they were first starting, the company was the beneficiary of a \$100,000 loan through Lake Country's Economic Development Loan Program.

"Electric co-ops are kind of unique, in a way. We have different forms of economic development financing through the USDA (United States Department of Agriculture)," said Sheldon. "We help our businesses either get started new, expand, update. They can add employees, equipment."

Sheldon added that Magnetation, as a new business, was able to receive money at a low interest rate in order to help get started. Since that time, the cooperative has helped the business with increasing power efficiency in order to operate more smoothly.

Despite the reach of Lake Country Power into the business and industry community of northern Minnesota, only about 20 percent of their service members fit into that category. The remaining members are all residential, which means that they're one of the main power providers for thousands of individuals and families who work in mining, or for a business that serves the mines. In part because they recognize how far the economic influence of the mining industry is to the region, Lake Country Power as an organization is officially supporting PolyMet in their



NATHAN BERGSTEDT/GRAND RAPIDS HERALD REVIEW  
**Lake Country Power's engineers and line crews building the substation that exclusively serves Magnetation.**

ongoing project to begin non-ferrous mining in the north-land. According to Birkeland, provided due diligence is put towards the environmental aspects of the project, the co-op is standing behind new mining endeavor.

"With the PolyMet project in particular, we don't stand to gain directly because we

wouldn't serve that load," said Birkeland. "But you know what, when it comes to the betterment of the region, when it comes to the betterment of northern Minnesota, and the opportunities that abound through this type of project, we testified in support of the PolyMet project."

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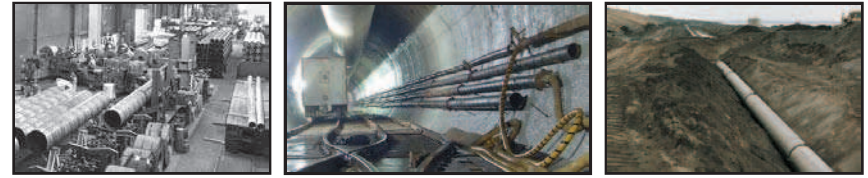
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# Building relationships and an alliance

**KELLY GRINSTEINER**  
HIBBING DAILY TRIBUNE

So far, so good. That's the sentiment from both co-chairs of the Iron Ore Alliance as they celebrate the first anniversary of the joint initiative between the United Steelworkers and U.S. Steel.

"We are working together to share the story of how important the company's iron ore business is to Minnesota, because we want it to continue to grow, create more jobs and find new ways to advance technology and protect the environment," said John Rebrovich, sub-district director of United Steelworkers (USW) District 11.

Rebrovich was officially named co-chair of the Iron Ore Alliance last week. He will lead with Chris Masciantonio, general manager of governmental affairs for U.S. Steel.

Rebrovich replaces Bob Bratulich, who is retiring after 39 years with the United Steelworkers.

"I am excited about the opportunity to work with U.S. Steel on these very important initiatives that impact our members," Rebrovich said.

"The Iron Ore Alliance provides a voice for the 1,900 workers at Minnesota Ore Operations, to advance common interests — of the USW and the company — of employing, investing and protecting the environment."

Starting in the mining industry in 1976 at Hibbing Taconite, Rebrovich has served as president of Local Union 2705 and vice president of Minnesota AFL-CIO. He's been a staff representative of the United Steelworkers District 11 since 1999.

"John is an outstanding leader and a great advocate for the United Steelworkers," said Masciantonio. "I look forward to working with John to advance the mutual interests of



**CHRIS MASCANTONIO**

Minnesota Ore Operations and our workforce."

But what is the Iron Ore Alliance?

It's a voice for the 1,864 people who work for Minnesota Ore Operations and helps advocate for the thousands of other jobs that benefit our neighbors, communities and the entire state.

"In short, it's a joint initiative meant to educate the public and Minnesota about us and the importance of U.S. Steel's iron ore business," Rebrovich said, adding that iron ore from Minnesota is critical to steelmaking in the United States.

U.S. Steel's Minnesota Ore Operations consist of Minntac in Mountain Iron, and Keetac in Keewatin, and is the state's largest producer of iron ore pellets, the key ingredient in blast furnace-produced steel. Minntac is the single largest iron ore pelletizing operation in the United States.

In addition to advocating for jobs and economic growth, the alliance supports the work done by U.S. Steel



**JOHN REBROVICH**

and the United Steelworkers to protect the environment and invest in the Minnesota operations.

Another priority is working to change policies that will help U.S. Steel's operations grow and improve.

"The alliance is us working together on a number of issues that we view as mutually important and beneficial to both the workforce, the company and the operations," Masciantonio said.

The Iron Ore Alliance was launched Feb. 20, 2013, at a press conference at the state capitol attended by Gov. Mark Dayton and Range area legislators.

Back in 2008, U.S. Steel and the United Steelworkers negotiated joint article in the labor agreement about public policy activities and concentrating on common interests, Rebrovich said.

"We want to educate the public on what we are doing and how we are doing," Rebrovich said. "We are a large number, and we're one of

the higher paying, which supports families and jobs, and we're proud of that."

It's a unique partnership, he opined. "And so far it's been going very well," added Rebrovich. "We can't agree on everything, but on the things we do agree on, let's work together on it."

Masciantonio said he and Bratulich had known each other for years and had a good working relationship.

"We both started recognizing that mining was becoming a more prevalent issue in Minnesota because of the attention of proposed mining projects," he said. "And when you step back and look at it, U.S. Steel and the United Steelworkers have been operating mines for 70, 80 years in Northern Minnesota. We thought it was probably a good idea for us to start working together to make sure the public and policy decision makers understand what our issues are."

And so they sat down, talked about how to go about it and then formed the alliance.

"We had a pretty good year overall," Masciantonio said. "I think we did a pretty good job of getting the message out there that iron mining is important to the Minnesota economy. We've been doing this for a long time, are good at it and feel we're doing it for everyone in the world."

The most significant coup of the Iron Ore Alliance in the past year was helping to secure the state permits to move forward with a 483-acre extension of Minntac's boundary, according to Rebrovich.

"We tackled that one head on and both worked very hard to get it done," he said "... We are one step at a time, one goal at a time. Hit them and keep going after them."

Extending the mine's boundary

SEE ALLIANCE, PAGE 44

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# ALLIANCE

FROM PAGE 43

will allow the facility to continue to mine and produce taconite pellets for approximately 16 years in the extension area, and is anticipated to create approximately 100 steelworker jobs. Minntac employs 1,400 workers. The project also represents more than \$40 million of investment by U.S. Steel.

"The next goal is to educate the public, specifically some of the government agencies about how iron mining has been around for 100 years and we did it right, do it environmentally right, invest in technology," Rebrovich said. "We live here and want a pristine environment too."

The first year has been about establishing relationships, Masciantonio said.

"Building a foundation and level of trust in one another," he added.

"While we try to have as many meetings as we can, sometimes we have to speak on behalf of the Iron Ore Alliance for the other when they are not around. We've developed pretty good relationships and a level of trust that we're comfortable with."

Rebrovich opined that the relationship between union and management hadn't changed much.

"We've always been here, and we're always going to be here," he said. "For example, we've each taken our own path to try and accomplish goals that we've both believed in. Now we are united in that, and hopefully this is a better way of accomplishing it."

Having a united voice and effort instead of taking separate paths to accomplish the same thing benefits both U.S. Steel and the United Steelworkers, Rebrovich added.

"We want employment for our members, and U.S. Steel has a stake in its business, so if we can agree on something and go after it together, it benefits both of us," he said. "It's a smart thing to do. It puts our heads together, and we get things done. Yes, we have other issues, but we focus on the ones that we can best do together."

A key to ensuring the continued success of the iron mining industry is education — not only the general public but elected officials as well, Masciantonio said.

"Obviously environmental issues are important to both the steelworkers and the company, so we really work on educating the public on what we already do so the public understands that we are doing it in a responsible way," he said. "Environmental stewardship is a priority for both of us. The public can rest assured that we are conducting business in a manner that is safe for environment."

There are a host of other issues and concerns, such as energy, that the company and its workforce can unite around.

"From taxes to other types of proposals that could impact the mining industry in one way or another — there's a whole gamut of issues," he said.

As general manager of governmental affairs for U.S. Steel, Masciantonio spends a lot of time working with policy makers. Much of that effort is educating them on how decisions in St. Paul affect the workforce on the Range.

The formation of the Iron Ore Alliance has had a positive impact in those endeavors, he noted.

"When elected officials recognize that both the union and leadership share a common view, they tend to have more confidence that the advice from the industry and union is pretty trustworthy and accurate," Masciantonio said. "It's not one message coming from the company and another message from the union, but one message together and that seems to resonate better with lawmakers. They feel better about it, and it makes a big difference."

It all comes down to one simple agreement — the United Steelworkers and U.S. Steel want to continue iron mining and keep people employed.

"Agreeing on that covers just about everything. As a unified voice, our message is stronger," said Masciantonio. "... Historically that wasn't

SEE ALLIANCE, PAGE 45

# Keetac receives safety award

TONY POTTER  
HIBBING DAILY TRIBUNE

When it comes to safety, Keewatin Taconite is one of the area's top mines.

Keetac, owned and operated by U.S. Steel Corp., has been honored for its dedication to ensuring the safety of its employees.

The taconite plant located in Keewatin was awarded the Sentinels of Safety Award on Oct. 30 at a dinner in Washington, D.C.

"Safety is a core value at U.S. Steel," said Sarah Cassella, public affairs representative for U.S. Steel.

The award is presented annually by the National Mining Association (NMA) with the purpose of recognizing the achievement of outstanding safety performance. It is also meant to stimulate greater interest in safety and to encourage development of more effective accident prevention programs among the nation's mineral mining operations, according to the NMA website.

The awards, which were initiated in 1925, are given annually to the nation's safest mines with a minimum of 4,000 injury-free hours.

"The Sentinels of Safety Awards honor the nation's safest mining operations, and the NMA is proud to recognize U.S. Steel's Minnesota Ore Operations for its outstanding commitment to the safety of its employees," said Hal Quinn, president and chief executive officer of the NMA, in a U.S. Steel release. "Achieving such a high level of performance raises the standard for our entire industry."

Keetac was recognized in the large open pit category for their 2012 safety record, which included an Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recordable injury rate of 0.23, according to U.S. Steel.

The company is proud of Keetac for their efforts in implementing safety

throughout the facility, Cassella said, noting the taconite plant was deserving of the award.

"The Sentinels of Safety Award speaks to the culture of safety we have worked to create at our facilities," she added. "... And it showcases our employees' dedication to safety."

This was the first time Keetac received this award. The taconite plant received an internal award, the Chief Executive Officer's Safety Award, in 2013 in recognition of its safety record.

On hand to accept the award were several Keetac employees, including Travis Kolari, Keetac plant manager, and Dan Pierce, president of United Steelworkers Local 2660.

Earning the award is a great accomplishment for Keetac and all of its members, Pierce said.

"We are all honored to get the award," he said. "There are a lot of people out there that work hard every day, and it's a great honor to get recognized."

Pierce said he believes that Keetac was honored with the award due to avoiding lost-time accidents.

"It comes down to the union and management sitting down and working together to get things resolved in regards to safety," he said. "We have a great safety committee that brings things forward to get addressed in a timely manner, and everyone that works out there wants to go home the way they came."

Pierce said that attending the award ceremony in Washington, D.C., with other union and company members was an honor.

"We all worked hard, and not just those from the union side and at the management level," he said. "Receiving the award is secondary to the work put in to get the award in the first place. I want to personally thank every member for working hard and always keeping safety in mind."

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**HEATING & COOLING TECHNICIAN**

- Graduates of this program will be prepared as entry-level technicians in the heating, air-conditioning and refrigeration industry. Students will be trained to install and service residential and light commercial equipment in the heating, air-conditioning and refrigeration field.
- Graduates are in high demand due to a shortage of qualified technicians nationwide. The heating, air-conditioning and refrigeration field is expected to grow by 33.7% by the year 2020.

**DIESEL MECHANIC**

- This program provides a modern equipped diesel shop in which student learn theory and application of 2-cycle and 4-cycle engines, electrical and hydraulic systems, clutches, heavy equipment, record-keeping, power transmissions, steering, breaks and tires.
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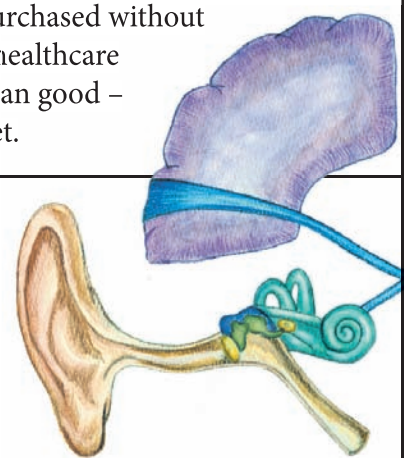
**INDUSTRIAL SYSTEMS TECHNOLOGY**

- Students will be prepared for employment in today's technologically advanced industrial and manufacturing environment. Hands-on training teaches skills such as mobile equipment operating, blueprint reading, mechanical systems, electricity fundamentals, welding, machining, and various diagnostic and repair procedures.
- The industry is expecting an impending retirement rate of up to 40% to 60%, creating a great job outlook for graduates.

## Why you should only buy hearing aids from a hearing healthcare professional

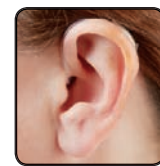
Where you get hearing aids is important. But buyer beware. There is no one-size-fits-all solution to hearing loss. Just as every person is unique, every hearing loss and hearing need is unique, too. To ensure you get a hearing aid that's custom-fit to your precise needs and lifestyle, it's always recommended that you consult a hearing healthcare professional. Hearing aids purchased without the consultation or advice of a hearing healthcare professional risk doing more damage than good — to both your confidence and your wallet.

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# ALLIANCE

FROM PAGE 44

the case. The union was often seen in opposition of the company, but that's different today. It's OK to agree with the Iron Ore Alliance because we are together in this. It removes that concern for elected officials."

The alliance could also serve as a model for other industries to work with its union leadership, he suggested.

"I hope we have a long, successful partnership and hope we continue to help people better understand the history of iron mining in Minnesota, what it means today and what it can be in the future," Masciantonio said. "It's important for the mining operations to remain competitive. There's lots of competition in the world ... so it's important that the mines in Minnesota operate in a very efficient, competitive way."

The alliance, in his eyes, is already a success given how federal and state lawmakers are more comfortable working with them and listening more.

"We've built those relationships and now we move forward with these leaders to make certain the iron mining industry stays front and center," Masciantonio said. "... I feel comfortable that in the past year we've already demonstrated that success."

While he may be heading in to session, Rebrovich said the Iron Range and the rest of the state will soon be hearing — and learning — from the Iron Ore Alliance. A large educational campaign is on tap.

"You will see a ramp up in educating people of Minnesota and the EPA (environmental protection agency) that we do mining right," he said. "We've been here a long time and will continue to be here a long time. ... For too long we've sat by and not said much, unless there was a fight once and a while, so now we're focusing on the things we do every day and want to promote that as well."

And sharing that had Rebrovich excited.

"You'll be hearing a lot from us — a lot of good, positive stuff," he added.



MARK SAUER/MESABI DAILY NEWS

U.S. Steel and Minntac are part of the Iron Ore Alliance.

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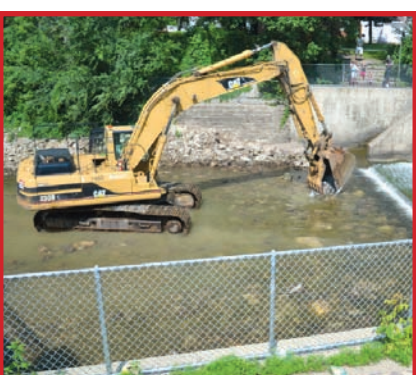


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**GUEST COLUMN**

**JASON METSA**  
6B DFL State Representative



DFL state Rep. Jason Metsa speaks about the importance of mining on the Range during a program at PolyMet to announce the release of PolyMet's Environmental Impact Statement.

MARK SAUER  
MESABI DAILY NEWS

# New generation of mining is spark we need

Generations ago, my family immigrated from Europe to Northeastern Minnesota in hopes of building a better, more prosperous life for themselves and their children. Our region's bounty of natural resources provided them the opportunity to turn that dream into reality.

On my mother's side, my great-

grandfather, Louis Sella, started a pasty shop to serve mining families in Nashwauk.

On my father's side, great-great-grandpa John Metsa homesteaded in Angora and worked in Soudan at the underground mine.

Hundreds more just like them forged a living and built the commu-

nities and businesses we live in and benefit from to this very day.

A few generations later, my father, John Metsa, started a family of his own with the same hopes and aspirations of those that came before him.

But in the 1980s, when the taconite industry had its downturn, our family faced the kind of economic challeng-

es that too many others have gone through over the past few decades.

My dad left his job at EVTAC and started pursuing a teaching degree at UMD, driving back and forth to Duluth to classes on nights and weekends while working for the Virginia Public Schools as a bus driver and custodian.

SEE METSA PAGE 47

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# METSA

FROM PAGE 46

Like so many families, we left the Range during these hard times. Unlike many others, we were lucky enough to return.

These ups and downs of our economy continue to be on the minds of folks in our region today. An undeniable lack of good, stable jobs means some people must decide whether or not to move elsewhere to make a living. This threatens to dismantle our local economies, erode our tax base, and prevent us from making the kinds of investments needed for our cities and towns to grow and prosper.

Fortunately, we have an opportunity before us to forge a new, thriving economy on the Range — one that offers diverse, stable jobs that can't be exported.

The untapped precious metals in our region — much like the natural resources my family benefitted from generations ago — will allow us to renew our position as a natural resource provider for the entire nation.

A new generation of mining is the spark we need to revitalize our regional economy right now and in the future. These companies require educated workers. They hire ecologists, environmentalists, geologists, chemists, and a slew of other professionals, and welders, electricians, millrights truck drivers and laborers to operate the new generation of stable and technological mining in North-eastern Minnesota.

My hope is that we can continue to be stewards of this land like our parents and grandparents. My dream is we will leave the next generation a sustainable natural resource-based economy that provides opportunity for young people like me to move back and work at the mines in a much different capacity than previous generations.

I want our region to be a place where our friends, families, and neighbors can make a good, stable living and find reliable jobs. Let's seize the opportunity in front of us so future generations can look back and be proud of our choice to build a new economy.



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