

## THE FABULOUS COEUR D'ALENE MINING DISTRICT

Sometime in February 1985, only a few months after the Coeur d'Alene district's 100th birthday, miners wrested the billionth ounce of silver from the district's mines. No sirens sounded that day. No bands played. The achievement was just another digit in the production figures for the district. Nevertheless, upon that historic moment the Coeur d'Alene laid claim to being the largest silver mining district in the world. The other major silver districts, including Pachuca and Guanajuato, Mexico, and Potosi, Bolivia, have all mined since the 1500s and each has produced about a billion ounces of silver.

The Coeur d'Alene district is located in northern Idaho, with the town of Wallace at its bustling center. The district also claims records for silver mines in the United States: the deepest—the Star-Morning mine (7,900 feet deep); the richest—the Sunshine mine (over 300 million ounces of silver); and the biggest—the Bunker Hill (over 180 miles of underground workings). The Sunshine is also the deepest mine below sea level (3,300 feet).

Major production for the district is from veins in metasedimentary rocks of the Belt Supergroup. Several active mines have followed these veins well over a mile deep. The mines in the district are an important part of Idaho's economy and in 1984 employed over 1,000 workers. About half of the newly mined silver in the United States comes from four of the top five domestic silver producers. These four mines are located in the Coeur d'Alene district.

In addition to silver, over 40 major mines in the district have yielded substantial amounts of zinc, lead, copper, antimony, and cadmium. Prior to closure in 1981, the Bunker Hill refining complex alone produced 20 percent of the nation's zinc and lead and 25 percent of its refined silver. By 1984, the district had produced over 8 million tons of lead and 3 million tons of zinc. Total metal production has a historic value of \$4.6 billion.

Hecla Mining Company is the largest domestic producer of silver. Its flagship mine, the Lucky Friday, vies annually with the Sunshine mine down the road for the title of No. 1 silver producer in the country. The Friday is highlighted by its "Silver Shaft," which presently extends to a depth of 6,100 feet and will eventually go to 7,500 feet. Hecla's other mineral properties include the Consolidated Silver project (a major exploration program) and the Escalante mine in Utah, another big silver mine.

The Sunshine Mining Company operates the Sunshine mine and the 16 to 1 mine in Nevada. The "Shine" is truly a national treasure, probably the richest silver mine in the world. Production has far exceeded the fabled Comstock lode in Nevada. Sunshine is totally independent as its own miner, refiner, fabricator, and distributor of silver.

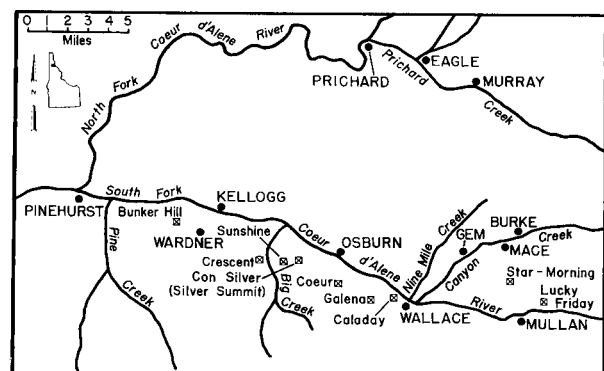
Asarco Inc. operates the Galena and Coeur mines, the lowest cost operations in the district. The Galena is usually the third or fourth silver producer in the United States competing with the Troy mine (another Asarco operation) in Montana. The Coeur is generally ranked No. 5. Asarco is an international mining company known for its excellent labor relations and efficient mining operations.

Coeur d'Alene Mines Corporation owns the Coeur mine and is presently starting up a major silver mine at Rochester, Nevada, and a gold property at Thunder Mountain in the rugged heartland of central Idaho.

Callahan Mining Company, owner of the Galena mine, is exploring the area just east of the mine under a \$26 million venture called the Caladay project. A 5,000-foot-deep shaft was completed at the Caladay in 1985, and underground exploration is underway. The company also operates the Ropes Gold mine in Michigan.

The Bunker Ltd. Partnership purchased the giant Bunker Hill mining and refining complex in 1982. The company currently operates the Crescent mine and maintains the Bunker Hill on standby while awaiting more favorable prices in the metals market.

A sample of galena ore from the Coeur d'Alene district is available upon request.



The location of major mines in the Coeur d'Alene mining district, Idaho.  
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