

MINING IN IDAHO'S ECONOMY—1993

Idaho's annual revenue from mining and mineral processing was \$883 million in 1990, the latest year of available figures. Nearly all of these sales reflect labor, goods, and services generated in Idaho, and most of the products were exported from Idaho. This revenue is a very large balance of trade, one that still compares favorably with other revenue entering the state. Indirect or ripple effects from mining revenue contribute further to the Idaho economy.

The following revenue data, obtained from the U.S. Bureau of Mines and the Idaho Mining Association, breakdown the contributions from major mineral commodities.

Phosphate mining	\$ 101,610,000
Phosphate mineral processing	484,085,000
Silver mining	67,565,000
Sand, gravel, and crushed stone	38,490,000
Other metals, minerals, and cement	191,776,000
Total	\$ 883,526,000

Silver, once the mainstay of the state's mining, has continued to decline in production. Today, only two silver mines are operating in the Coeur d'Alene mining district, and Nerco's DeLamar Mine in Owyhee County currently has the highest production rate.

Phosphate mining and the processing of phosphate rock into elemental phosphorous and fertilizer products now dominate the state's mineral industry. This has meant a shift in economic emphasis from historically important northern Idaho to southeastern Idaho. However, Hecla Mining Company and Coeur d'Alene Mines, both headquartered in northern Idaho and originating as Idaho silver mines, are important because of their international scope.

During 1990, seventy mineral exploration projects were underway in Idaho. Although there is no official reporting of the exploration costs for labor, goods, and services in Idaho, these expenses are estimated to have exceeded \$30 million. Most of the exploration targets were gold deposits. Exploration in Idaho peaked in 1990, but still continues. Among the new mines opened in 1992 as a result of earlier gold exploration was Pegasus Gold Corporation's Black Pine Mine located southeast of Burley.

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