

Nonfuel Mineral Production in Idaho — 1995

The U.S. Geological Survey's estimate of nonfuel mineral production for Idaho in 1995, along with data from 1994, is shown in Table 1. More detailed information on specific commodities has been compiled by the Idaho Geological Survey and is shown in Table 2. As in past years, the significant difference in the total value of nonfuel production in Table 1 (\$339,000) and Table 2 (\$1,091,742,000) is due to two ways of calculating the value of Idaho's phosphate production. Table 1 records the value of the raw ore; Table 2 includes the value of value-added products.

In 1995, the state's mining industry set a record for nonfuel mineral production of just over \$1 billion. Led by phosphate (\$569 million) and gold (\$115 million), the record exceeds last year's total by over \$200 million. Contributing substantially to the record were molybdenum mining and the aluminum recycling business. Both gold and molybdenum production reached new highs with gold doubling the old record (149,816 ounces) set in 1941. Idaho also led the nation in the production of antimony, vanadium, and garnet. The increase in the

state's economic growth translated into much higher values for sand and gravel and other construction aggregates, which were worth twice the state's silver production. Idaho's mining sector also produces cement, lime, lead, zinc, copper, pumice, scoria, zeolite, silica, and dimension stone.

The new gold record of 300,023 ounces is worthy of special mention. The record is the result of discoveries during a major gold rush in the late 1980s and early 1990s. This frenzy of exploration was the biggest since gold fever last gripped the state in the 1930s. Two of these new mines, Beartrack (owned by FMC Gold Corporation) in Lemhi County and Grouse Creek (Hecla Mining Company) in Custer County began operations in 1995. Other gold mines adding to the record included Blackpine (Pegasus Gold Corporation) in Cassia County, DeLamar (Kinross Gold Corporation) in Owyhee County, Stibnite (Dakota Mining Company) in Valley County, and the Yellowjacket mine (U.S. Antimony Corporation) in Lemhi County. Even the big Lucky Friday and Sunshine mines in the Coeur d'Alene mining district contributed a

Table 1. Nonfuel Raw Mineral Production¹ in Idaho, 1994-1995

Mineral	1994		1995 ^p	
	Quantity	Value*	Quantity	Value*
Gemstones	NA	\$ 287	NA	\$ 119
Phosphate rock (thousand metric tons)	W	W	W	W
Pumice (metric tons)	W	W	W	W
Sand and gravel:				
Construction (thousand metric tons)	14,500	46,300	14,700	49,200
Silver ² (metric tons)	W	W	W	W
Stone, crushed (thousand metric tons)	4,160 ^e	20,300 ^e	4,000	19,400
Combined value of antimony, cement, clays, copper, feldspar, garnet, gold, lead, lime, molybdenum, sand and gravel (industrial), stone (dimension), vanadium ore, zinc, and values indicated by symbol W	XX	279,000	XX	330,000
Total	XX	\$346,000	XX	\$399,000

Source: U.S. Geological Survey.

¹Production as measured by mine shipments, sales, or marketable production (including consumption by producers). ^pPreliminary.

*Value in thousands of dollars. ²Recoverable content of ores, etc. NA/Not Available. W/Withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data; value included with "Combined value" data. ^eEstimated. XX/Not applicable.

Table 2. Value of Nonfuel Mineral Production in Idaho, 1990-1995
(value in thousands of dollars)

Commodity	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Gold	\$ 45,649	\$ 39,107	\$ 35,241	\$ 40,919	\$ 39,343	\$ 115,209
Moly	44,634	13,419	28,841	-0-	45,240*	80,400
Pb+Zn+Cu	67,947	18,400	18,000	15,670	12,446	13,826
Silver	68,418	43,807	32,131	26,231	22,762	30,871
Phosphate	464,280	585,695	546,842	568,152	630,000	568,971
Other	83,011	97,518	112,194	126,653	127,171	282,465
Total	\$773,939	\$797,946	\$773,249	\$777,625	\$879,962*	\$1,091,742

Production data, except those for phosphate, are based on figures provided by the U.S. Bureau of Mines (USBM) for 1990-1993. The value of phosphate for 1991-1993 and 1995 was tabulated by the Idaho Mining Association (IMA) and is estimated for 1990 and 1994. The IMA number is the combined value (about \$105 a ton) of phosphoric acid and elemental phosphorous produced from raw phosphate ore; it is not the value of the raw ore (about \$25/ton) that is reported by the USBM and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). Annual totals include this value-added phosphate number and are therefore significantly higher than USBM/USGS totals. *Other* includes antimony, cement, clay, garnet, lime, stone (dimension and crushed), vanadium, pumice, gemstones, and sand and gravel. For 1994 and 1995, the Idaho Geological Survey has computed the value for all commodities using some USBM and USGS numbers. The USGS took over the USBM minerals program in 1995.

*Corrected from last year's reported value for molybdenum of \$28,999; the total is also changed to reflect this correction.

few hundred ounces of gold to the total, although these mines are better known for being part of the largest silver-producing district in the world. Based on the new record, Idaho would have been the fourth largest gold producer in the nation in 1994 following Nevada, California, and Montana.

These nonfuel mineral producers are very important to Idaho's economy, especially in the rural areas. Over 1,000 people are employed in current gold and silver operations, and they are among the highest paid industrial workers in the state. In addition, taxes paid by these operations are crucial to rural economies.