



# **MEDIA RELEASE**

## **Alaska Department of Natural Resources**

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**SUBJECT:** 2003 BRINGS UPS AND DOWNS TO ALASKA'S MINERAL INDUSTRY  
Value stays above \$1 billion mark for 8th straight year

Alaska's mineral industry showed some ups and downs during calendar year 2003. Although the cumulative value of Alaska's mining industry for the year remained above the \$1 billion mark for the eighth consecutive year, it fell about \$6 million from the \$1.073 billion reported in 2002. Exploration investment increased to \$27.6 million, up 4 percent from 2002 levels, and was compounded by a 15 percent increase in development investment to \$39.2 million.

However, the decreased value of mineral products led to a lower total value of the mineral industry in 2003 compared to 2002. The increase in placer gold production during 2003 could not offset the decrease in lode metal production from several of Alaska's largest mines and the significant drop in reported sand and gravel production. Again in 2003, metals accounted for the largest share of total production (89 percent), and zinc remained the most valuable metal.

Total minerals industry employment in 2003 was estimated to be 1,906 full-time-equivalent jobs, about 900 fewer jobs than the 2,824 jobs reported in 2002. Jobs declined across the mineral industry except in exploration. Large mines cut employees during the year in response to low metal prices. Most of the jobs decline was in the development and industrial minerals sectors. The rebound in metal prices will likely prompt an increase in mining jobs in 2004.

About 2,443 new state mining claims (296,800 acres), 92 new state prospecting sites (14,720 acres), and 676 new federal claims (595 lode, 81 placer, for a total of 13,520 acres) were staked in 2003. State claim staking increased dramatically from 2002 levels, while the number of new federal mining claims almost tripled from 2002 levels and reached staking levels not seen since 1997. The amount of land in Alaska under claim increased in 2003, with approximately 2.9 million acres of land covered by claims or prospecting sites in 2003. The largest groups of claims (mostly state claims) in Alaska occurred in the Fairbanks, Pogo, Tangle Lakes (Denali Block), and Pebble areas.

## MORE ##

Special Report 58, *Alaska's Mineral Industry 2003*, is available in Adobe Acrobat PDF format from the Division of Geological & Geophysical Surveys' (DGGs) Web site (<http://www.dggs.dnr.state.ak.us>) or obtained from DGGs at 3354 College Road, Fairbanks, Alaska 99709-3707 (phone 907-451-5020). The 75-page free booklet is also available from the Department of Natural Resources' Public Information Center, 550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1260, Anchorage, Alaska (907-269-8400) and from the Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development's Office of Economic Development in Fairbanks and Anchorage. Mail orders should be sent to the Fairbanks DGGs office (fax 907-451-5050).

The report will be available for inspection beginning November 22, 2004, at the Alaska Resources Library and Information Service, 3150 C Street, Suite 100, Anchorage, and at the Historical Collection of the Alaska State Library in the State Office Building in Juneau. The Historical Collection is available from 1 to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday (907-465-2927).

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