



Dear Alaska Miners and Friends:

The Alaska Miners Association is proud to announce the **2026 Rock Stars of Alaska's Mining Industry!** These awards recognize the individuals, companies, and teams whose leadership, ingenuity, and service strengthen Alaska mining and the communities we call home.

We will honor this year's recipients at the **AMA Annual Convention Closing Banquet on Thursday, November 5, 2026.** Please join us in congratulating our winners!

ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR AWARD — Mike Satre

Mike Satre brings practical mining expertise and years of association leadership to his advocacy for Alaska's mining industry. A former AMA president and current co-chair of the Federal Oversight Committee, Mike consistently contributes his time and knowledge to help policymakers understand mining's economic contributions, operational needs, and opportunities.

From presenting industry updates to the Alaska Legislature to participating in the Juneau Mining Forum and sharing Alaska's mining story with national audiences, Mike is a trusted voice for our industry. His sustained engagement helps ensure Alaska miners have knowledgeable representation in the discussions that shape their future.

CORPORATE MEMBER OF THE YEAR AWARD — Techline Alaska

Techline Alaska demonstrates what it means to be an engaged corporate member. Through hosting the Fairbanks Branch summer barbecue, sponsoring Alaska Night at AME Roundup, supporting the convention's Rock Fight competition, and regularly participating in AMA trade shows, Techline invests in the programs and relationships that keep our association strong.

Its support reaches from local member gatherings to international industry outreach. Along with its drilling equipment expertise and technical resources, Techline brings a consistent willingness to participate, contribute, and help Alaska's mining community thrive.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AWARD — Valdez Creek Mining, LLC

Valdez Creek Mining has put environmental stewardship into practice by removing 230 tons of solid waste and derelict equipment left by previous operators in the Valdez and White creek areas. Taking on this substantial legacy cleanup has made a tangible improvement to a historic Alaska mining landscape.

The company's work also earned national recognition through the Bureau of Land Management's 2026 Hardrock Mineral Small Operator Award. Valdez Creek Mining shows how miners can apply their equipment, skills, and determination to care for Alaska's land and leave it in better condition.

HARD HAT SAFETY AWARD — Kinross Alaska Exploration Team

The Kinross Alaska Exploration Team is being recognized for practical, employee-driven improvements to core-cutting safety. The team designed and refined sound-dampening saw enclosures that reduced initial measured noise levels during cutting from approximately 105 to 90 decibels, while also helping contain flying debris, dust, and mist. Specially designed guides help keep employees' hands farther from saw blades.

The team continues to build on those improvements and is working toward implementing a fully enclosed automated core saw. Its approach demonstrates the value of identifying hazards, developing solutions, measuring results, and continually finding safer ways to perform essential exploration work.

ROCK STAR OF PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD — Dr. Erin Campbell

As Alaska State Geologist and Director of the Division of Geological & Geophysical Surveys, Dr. Erin Campbell has made engagement with Alaska's mining community a priority. Through convention presentations, agency updates, and direct outreach, she helps miners understand and use the public geoscience information that supports exploration and informed decisions.

Erin also makes time to listen. By seeking input on data access, mapping needs, and survey priorities, she connects the division's work with the people who rely on it. Her accessible leadership and commitment to field science are strengthening the relationship between DGGS and Alaska's miners.

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD — Joseph "Joe" Kurtak

Joe Kurtak gives generously of his time and experience to strengthen AMA and introduce the next generation to Alaska mining. As a volunteer adviser to the UAA Geology Club, he has organized recurring field trips to Lucky Shot, bringing groups of up to 20 students into the field to connect classroom learning with mining operations and potential careers.

Joe's service also includes a decade chairing AMA's Geoscience Technical Session, continued contributions to convention programming, and participation on UAA's Geological Sciences Community Advisory Board. His commitment to sharing knowledge and making professional connections benefits both today's members and tomorrow's workforce.

THE CHARLES C. HAWLEY LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD — Michael “Mike” Smith Sr.

For more than five decades, Mike Smith Sr. has helped make mineral exploration possible across Alaska. Since founding Alaska Minerals, Inc. in 1985, he has built and operated remote camps that provide the heat, water, food, power, communications, and logistical support crews need to work in some of the state’s most challenging locations. His ingenuity and practical knowledge have supported generations of geologists, drillers, and field crews.

Mike’s legacy is equally evident in the trust he has earned. Colleagues describe someone who solves difficult problems, shares his experience freely, and puts people and lasting relationships first. Still actively involved in the work, Mike embodies the perseverance, integrity, and dedication to Alaska mining celebrated by the Charles C. Hawley Lifetime Achievement Award.

Congratulations to our 2026 Rock Stars, and thank you for all you do for Alaska’s mining industry. We look forward to celebrating with you on November 5!

Alaska Miners Association