

Montana Mining Day to honor the state's mining industry on Feb. 9

Sponsored content by Mary McHugh, Brand Ave. Studios contributing writer

It's not the same "miners-and-pick-and-shovel industry" it was 150 years ago.

Today, mining is essential for cutting-edge technology, integral to countless facets of modern industry and even national security, said Matt Vincent, executive director of the Montana Mining Association.

To honor the mines, the miners and the businesses that make the industry so essential, Feb. 9 will mark the inaugural Montana Mining Day. Established by 2025's House Bill 203 to honor Montana's rich mining heritage, the date was selected because Montana's state motto "Oro y Plata" (Spanish for "gold and silver"), was adopted on Feb. 9, 1865.

"We want to increase awareness to help folks really understand and appreciate the role mining plays in our global supply chain and realize that a lot of the country's mining gets done with the highest environmental standards right here in Montana," Vincent said. "We are called the Treasure State for a reason — because of our mineral resources and natural resources."

For the last century and a half, mining communities throughout the state have celebrated the industry in a variety of ways such as Miners Union Day parades, Smelterman's Day picnics and other local events. Montana Mining Day will be the first broad-scale recognition of mining past, present and future, Vincent said. Just as important, the event will "increase awareness that Montana leads the industry with responsible mining practices that create

good jobs, strengthen local economies and support our communities."

In Montana, the mining industry sustains substantial economic benefits. According to a 2023 study, the hard rock mining industry accounted for 18,472 permanent jobs and an economic impact totaling \$7.3 billion. The Montana Mining Association was founded over 50 years ago to assist mining companies, small miners and allied trade members, while also supporting national mining initiatives and providing education and awareness throughout Montana. The trade association has around 200 members, both globally and locally, impacting the Montana communities.

Montana Governor Greg Gianforte will kick off the first-ever Montana Mining Day with a proclamation recognizing the industry's historical and ongoing contributions. Primarily organized by the Montana Mining Association and its partners, like the World Museum of Mining, the day will also feature a variety of community-focused and digital events, including a two-part podcast release, industry speakers, and a series of videos that will focus on how existing mines operate and which will be made available to schools and civic organizations.

"We're really excited about the videos," Vincent said. "Most of our schools don't have easy access to an operating mine nearby, so these videos will serve as a virtual mine tour so that we can bring the mine into the classroom."

The first two videos, around 15 minutes each, will feature the operations at



the Westmoreland Rosebud Coal Mine and the Montana Resources Continental Mine, a copper and molybdenum producer. The association will also announce the creation of the Montana Mining Hall of Fame, which will be a joint effort coordinated with and based out of the World Museum of Mining, located on the Montana Tech campus in Butte. Vincent said the Hall of Fame will recognize not only the individuals who established the industry but also those who are advancing and innovating it. Inductees will be announced annually on Dec. 6, National Miner's Day. More details to follow.

Event organizers will also unveil a Montana Mining Day logo that will adorn T-shirts and other commemorative items. For future Montana Mining Days, student artists will be invited to submit logo designs as part of a statewide art contest. The winning entrant will receive prizes and the student's

design will be used on the annual t-shirt and other merchandise and promotions as part of the Feb. 9 festivities.

"The vast majority of our industry's employees are hands down, heads down in the muck working and doing their jobs day after day," Vincent said. "We're here to help celebrate what they do and encourage folks to understand mining's importance and how it affects each one of us."

For more information on the Montana Mining Association, or to learn more about Montana Mining Day, please visit montanamining.org.

