

A Summation of Mineral Resource Activity in Baker County during 1960

Oregon's mineral production for 1960 registered a 9 percent gain over the previous year to set a record-breaking production total of nearly 55 million dollars according to published U.S. Bureau of Mines statistics. In addition, the mineral industry for 1960 is credited with employment of 10,588 people and a payroll in excess of 65 million dollars.

Sharp increases in the output of cement and limestone, up 18 and 10 percent respectively over the previous year, contributed substantially to the making of this record. Thus, because of its notable output of these materials, including burned lime, Baker County retains its historic position of one of the state's foremost producers of wealth originating from mineral resources.

Activity in the county in connection with other minerals was negligible in the instance of gold mining but included continued investigation by certain of the major mining companies of the geology of the copper prospects in the Lower Powder area. In addition, stone from Doolay Mountain was produced and marketed to wholesalers in Portland for building purposes. The stone, a colorful banded rock of volcanic origin, was sold under the trade name of "Moon Mesa" rock and retailed successfully at widely distributed points in the Pacific northwest. Offsetting this development was the regrettable destruction by fire of the facilities of the Northwest Granite Company at Haines, the oldest continuously-operated business establishment in the mining field in the county.

N.S. Wagner, August 9, 1961

Note: The Bureau of Mines uses raw material values for its statistical records in the instance of many minerals. If this was not done and the value of various processed products was used instead, the value of Oregon's mineral production would be far in excess of 100 million dollars for 1960.

CHAMBER COMMERCE MINING COMMITTEE REPORT FOR 1960

The value of Oregon's mineral production for 1959 reached an all-time high of nearly fifty million dollars as compared with an annual value of approximately twelve million dollars in 1940. Conversely, the annual value of the output from Oregon's gold mines reached the highest level on record during 1940, yet stands today at the lowest level ever recorded. Paradoxical though this may seem, Baker County rated as the principal gold-producing county in the state in 1940 and it still rated as one of the states leading producers of mineral wealth in 1959 despite the fact that gold mining was practically non-existent.

This spectacular switch in nature, and increase in value, of Oregon's mineral output is due to a large extent to increased production of minerals of non-metallic type. Limestone classes as a non-metallic mineral, and the output of limestone, and the products processed therefrom, has more than kept pace with the trend. Therefore, since Baker County has the only producing burned lime plant in the state, and one of the three Portland cement plants, it should be quite evident that the limestone processing industries are of very material importance to the economy of the county. In addition, it should be remembered that appreciable quantities of raw limestone are shipped regularly from Baker County sources to various sugar refineries, to the Oregon Portland Cement Company's plant in Oswego, and to a lesser extent to some paper manufacturing centers.

Despite the recent flare-up of publicity relative to the rapidly dwindling stock of gold in the United States, the Treasury Department has re-affirmed its oft-stated opposition to the making of any change in the price of gold. In view of this situation the outlook for the gold miner continues dim and there is little justification for anticipating any substantial increase in gold mining activity in the county in the near future. However, certain cinnabar and copper prospects were examined in the county during 1960 by interested companies and additional study, with perhaps some development work, could conceivably materialize in connection with these prospects in the future.

Early in 1960 your committee took out membership in the Northwest Mining Association, Spokane. This is the oldest, and one of the most active, mining associations in the nation, and its membership includes most of the leading personalities currently engaged in mining in the Northwest, British Columbia and Alaska. As the result of affiliation with the Northwest Mining Association, your committee has benefited from the Association's advices concerning legislative trends of importance to the mining industry. Along this line your committee has studied several bills dealing with natural resource problems and public domain management, and appropriate action was taken in instances considered adverse to the best interest of a healthy mining industry.

In short, your committee's main concern during 1960 has centered largely on matters pertaining to the right of access to the public domain for prospecting purposes, the right to prospect and mine without unnecessary and unreasonable restrictions, and the need of safeguarding these rights to the end that mineral products may continue to be mined in this country. After all, the economic factors responsible for the prevailing lack of mining in this nation, in the instance of several mineral commodities, are factors which can, and will, change in time, but no healthy production will follow any such change if the right to enter and prospect and mine during years to come are not preserved today.

October 10, 1962

RECENT ACTIVITY IN CONNECTION WITH MINERAL RESOURCES
IN BAKER COUNTY

The value of mineral production in Oregon for 1961 remained close to the all-time high of nearly \$55,000,000 established in 1960. However, the value of mineral wealth produced in Baker County decreased to \$4,927,000 for 1961 according to figures reported by the U. S. Bureau of Mines. The county nevertheless rates as the third highest producer of mineral wealth in the State with limestone and related lime products accounting for the preponderance of the production.

Other mineral commodities produced in Baker County consisted of construction materials—crushed rock, sand, gravel and building stone. Gold production increased somewhat but remains at a low ebb and will doubtless continue to do so in view of the adverse economic climate confronting the industry.

In the field of prospect investigation it can be reported that the Cyprus Mining Company sampled several potentially important diatomite occurrences in Oregon in recent months including the Baker County occurrences at Keating and a neighboring occurrence at Telocaset on the Baker-Union County border. Favorable geologic conditions in Baker County also resulted in the establishment of an important seismic installation at Sparta in connection with the Department of Defense's Vela-Uniform program. This installation cost approximately \$500,000, has a staff of seven employees and will be a continuing and probably expanding development.