

# Exploring the FUTURE

## MINING AND MINERAL EXPLORATION IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Mining is British Columbia's third largest industry, directly employing more than 11,000 people. The province provides more than half of Canada's coal production, along with a growing range of metals, industrial minerals and structural materials used domestically and exported around the world. Along with coal, British Columbia is a major producer of copper, gold, zinc, silver, lead and non-metallic minerals. The total output of British Columbia mines in 2000 was valued at over \$2.8 billion.

## MINING PRODUCTION

### Coal

British Columbia is Canada's number one coal producer. In 2000, the province produced 26 million tonnes from eight mines with a value of approximately \$1.4 billion. About 97 per cent is metallurgical coal, exported to steel makers in Asia, Europe and South America. British Columbia also produces small amounts of thermal coal, used for thermal power generation.

### Copper

British Columbia leads the country in copper production, accounting for over 40 per cent of Canada's total output. In 2000, copper mined in British Columbia was valued at \$730 million and used largely for electrical wiring, plumbing fixtures and roofing.

### Gold and Silver

British Columbia produces about 50 per cent of Canada's silver and a significant amount of the country's gold. In 2000, gold from British Columbia mines was valued at \$335 million, with silver production valued at \$140 million. These precious metals are used in jewelry and electronics. Silver is also widely used in photographic film.

### Zinc and Lead

British Columbia produced \$247 million worth of zinc and \$30 million worth of lead in 2000, placing the province in the top three in Canada for production of these commodities. One British Columbia mine alone — the world-renowned Sullivan mine in southeastern British Columbia — has produced, in its lifetime, enough zinc to make 160 million cars and enough lead for 500 million car batteries.

### Molybdenum

British Columbia is the only province in Canada mining this mineral, which is valued as an additive in steel alloys. In 2000, British Columbia molybdenum production was valued at \$64 million.

### Non-metallic minerals and structural materials

These include sulphur, gypsum, limestone, magnesite, volcanic pumice, basalt, silica, gem stones, clay, fuller's earth, sand, gravel and rip rack rock used in construction. In 2000, British Columbia produced over \$51 million worth of non-metallic minerals and \$448 million worth of structural materials.

### For more information, contact:

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