
Missouri Lead

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Missouri—Premier Lead Producer of the World Lead Mining—A Missouri Institution

Since 1720 lead has played an important role in the growth and development of Missouri. The history of Missouri begins with the history of its lead mining. Lead mining hastened the settlement of the wilderness, affected the building of roads and railroads, generated commerce and industry, and created an economic base for generations of Missourians. It has been said that Missouri is a state built on a foundation of lead.

Lead Minerals and Deposits

Some of the largest and most important lead deposits in the world are located in southeast Missouri. While the state lead deposits are extensive and extremely rich, they have a very simple mineralogy. Only a few of the many known lead minerals are found in Missouri. In fact, the primary sulfide, galena, is the only common and abundant lead mineral occurring in the state. The secondary minerals cerussite and anglesite are also found, but rarely and only in small quantities.

Missouri—Premier Lead Producer of the World

Total, all-time production is estimated at more than 17 million tons valued at nearly five billion dollars. For more than 70 years Missouri has led all other states in lead production, and in 1983 accounted for nearly half a million tons (92 percent of the total U.S. production). The tremendous resource of known lead deposits currently being mined in the Viburnum Trend District of southeast Missouri, and continued active exploration for new deposits, virtually guarantees Missouri a leading role in lead production for years to come.

Galena—Official State Mineral

It seems only fitting that Missouri's most economically important mineral be properly recognized by the people of this state. To that end, in 1967 the General Assembly enacted legislation designating galena the official state mineral of Missouri. In 1997 Missouri produced 354,368 tons at an estimated \$329,845,734. In 2000 Missouri produced 313,105 tons, estimated at \$128,838,880.

