

Mining Matters

WHAT WOULD WE DO WITHOUT MINING?

As a developed nation, Canada's demand for and consumption of mineral products is extensive. Each individual, on average, uses more than one million pounds of different minerals and rocks over a lifetime. This includes:

800 pounds of lead – Primarily used in batteries. Also used as a radiation shielding during x-ray treatment by your doctor and dentist and as a protective shield on your TV screen to protect you from radiation from that source.

750 pounds of zinc – Used as a rust inhibitor for steel in the construction of cars, culverts, buildings, washing machines, ships and trains.

1,500 pounds of copper – Used in the manufacture of copper wire to conduct electricity needed in your car, home, office, school, church, and appliances.

3,600 pounds of aluminum – Cans, aircraft and automobile construction, bicycles, sporting and electronic equipment, and appliances.

32,000 pounds of iron – Used to make steel for cars, subways, ships, cans, building construction, heavy equipment, appliances, power transmission turbines and towers.

27,000 pounds of clays – Used to coat the pages of newspapers, magazines, stationery, brochures and boxes so that the ink used in printing on them will be bright and will not run. Also used as a brightener and abrasive in toothpaste and to provide a smooth coating for your stomach in medicines.

28,000 pounds of salt – Used in food preservation (almost all canned and frozen food contain salt), to enhance the taste of foods and to melt the ice on streets and highways during the winter. Also used in the manufacture of many chemicals, for water treatment, papermaking, soaps & detergents and in petroleum refining.

1,000,000 pounds of stone, sand, gravel and cement – Use in streets, highways and sidewalks; in the foundation for your house and school; as decorative materials for yards and gardens; in water purification plants to protect your health and in the construction of buildings from the most modest of homes to the world's tallest skyscrapers.

At www.rocksandminerals.com/uses.htm, you can check out more minerals and their uses in items that we consume and/or use daily.

"Mining Matters" is a bi-monthly column written by Anastasia Ledwon, P.Geo., and welcomes your feedback and questions at general@smithers.ca.

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