

NEWS RELEASE – October 16, 2025

Contact: Nick Letzkus

letzkus@smenet.org

SME Arizona Conference Returns in December

Signature annual event provides platform addressing challenges and rapidly increasing opportunities for the mining industry in the Southwest



From December 7-8 at the Westin La Paloma Resort in Tucson, AZ, the 2025 SME Arizona Conference will feature expert speakers, enlightening technical sessions and lively networking events, providing attendees with another opportunity to advance together during a landmark era for mining in the region.

The conference program covers the latest regional developments in the areas of mining (including Northern Mexico), environment, geotechnical, mineral processing, geology, and new projects. Special highlights include a keynote session titled “Forging the Future: Responsible Innovation in a Changing Climate” by Andrea Vaccari, Vice President, Responsible Production Frameworks and Sustainability, Freeport-McMoRan. This year’s Luncheon Speaker is Pat Risner, President of South32’s Hermosa Project, who will provide key project progress updates as it advances as one of the most significant domestic critical minerals projects.

Attendees may also choose from two workshops to enhance their conference experience with additional professional development opportunities. “The Courage to Lead” workshop features a collaboration between Women in Mining (WIM) and SME that explores leading through difficult situations, advocating for yourself and others with integrity, and demonstrating agency. “Hands-On, Minds-On: A Workshop for Advancing Leading Practices in Arid Mineland Reclamation – From Exploration to Closure” unites industry leaders, consultants, academics, and government agency representatives to explore innovative, real-world strategies for successful mine reclamation across the entire mine life cycle—from exploration to closure.

“This year’s conference is occurring during an exciting crossroads for the region, which is currently supplying vast quantities of critical minerals moving us towards domestic independence,” said Trika Graham, Manager of Water Quality Programs at Freeport-McMoRan and Conference Chair. “To advance this monumental effort, we encourage you to join us at this can’t-miss gathering for students and professionals alike.”

Conference attendees will network and engage with the next generation of industry professionals during exciting events such as the brand new “Shark Pit,” a Shark Tank-style innovation pitch competition where students present bold new ideas to transform the future of mining. In addition, a Student Poster Session will feature 20 posters from students highlighting their research and showcasing their innovation.

For more information and to register, visit smeaz.org.

About SME

The Society for Mining, Metallurgy & Exploration (SME) brings together the mining and mineral industry’s brightest and most dedicated professionals. Over 14,000 global members advance their careers with the world-class technical resources, educational programs, networking opportunities and professional development tools from SME. Our members are focused on

SME

Society for
Mining, Metallurgy
& Exploration

sharing best practices for safety, environmental stewardship and moving mining forward. SME.

Inspiring mining professionals worldwide.



12999 E. Adam Aircraft Circle, Englewood, CO 80112
Phone: 720-738-4085 | Email Us: cs@smenet.org

SME

Society for
Mining, Metallurgy
& Exploration

Inspiring Mining Professionals Worldwide