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2024 SME Minnesota Conference Returns to Duluth

From April 15-17, the 2024 SME Minnesota Conference features three days of extensive programming focused on the developments, technology, trends and innovations directly affecting the region. Professionals and students alike will encounter forward-thinking perspectives on critical topics such as environmental compliance and permitting, innovation in processing, plant maintenance optimization and more.

This year's conference theme is "Sustainable Mining: The Past Reveals Our Future." Opening Plenary speakers will focus on the historical role of mining in shaping Minnesota both economically and geographically. The Closing Plenary will include speakers from US Steel and Cleveland Cliffs looking at how iron ore will play a role in Minnesota's future.

"Minnesota is poised to play a continued role in the supply of natural resources, including those instrumental to a greener economy," said Katie Larson, Chair of the 2024 Minnesota Conference and the Mineland Reclamation Supervisor with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. "We look forward to examining the role mining has played in our history while reinforcing a commitment to sustainable mining practices in the future through the event's robust plenary sessions, technical sessions, courses and field trips."

Featured Speakers



Peter Kero, VP and Senior Environmental Engineer at Barr Engineering Co., will present “Reclaiming Minnesota’s Mined Lands: Lessons from Minnesota’s Mining Past.” Kero was the visionary behind the award-winning Redhead Mountain Bike Park, which repurposed several former iron mine pits and stockpiles into a destination-quality regional park for mountain biking, hiking, water recreation and all-terrain vehicles. His book *Minescapes: Reclaiming Minnesota's Mined Lands* (Minnesota Historical Society Press) was recently selected as a finalist for the 2024 Minnesota Book Awards in the category of Minnesota Nonfiction.



Ida Rukavina, Commissioner of Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation (IRRR), will present “Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation: Our History and Future.” Rukavina leads a state of Minnesota economic development agency located in Eveleth, which is about one hour north of Duluth. The agency works to strengthen the businesses, communities and workforce in northeastern Minnesota. It was created over 80 years ago to diversify the economy of a region largely dependent on a natural resource-based economy – primarily iron mining.



Erika Chan (left), Head of Sustainability from US Steel, and **Marissa Brydle** (right), Director of Corporate Sustainability for Cleveland-Cliffs will provide corporate updates that will highlight their vision for a sustainable future.



George Hudak, a Geologic Consultant with George Hudak Geosciences, will present the annual professional ethics seminar. George recently retired as the Research Group Leader for the Geology and Mineral Opportunities Strategic Research Group at the Natural Resources Research Institute (NRRI) and is an economic geologist/volcanologist with extensive education and research experience in geology, mineral deposits and mineral potential in Minnesota and North America.

The SME Minnesota Conference has been taking place in the region for over 90 years, providing professional development to one of the nation's largest mining sectors. To learn more about the 2024 SME Minnesota Conference, including schedule details and registration information, visit SMEMNconference.org.

About SME

The Society for Mining, Metallurgy & Exploration (SME) brings together the mining and mineral industry's brightest and most dedicated professionals. Over 13,000 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 sharing best practices for safety, environmental stewardship and moving mining forward. SME. *Inspiring mining professionals worldwide.*