

NEWS RELEASE – February 12, 2026

Contact: Nick Letzkus

letzkus@sment.org

MINEXCHANGE 2026 Conference to Conclude with Signature Awards Event

Annual Tradition Honors Groundbreaking Achievements of the Industry's Foremost Innovators, Leaders and Experts



An assortment of prestigious SME awards, including the Ivan B. Rahn Education Award (center)

Each year, the Society for Mining, Metallurgy & Exploration (SME) presents more than 70 awards throughout the week at the MINEXCHANGE SME Annual Conference & Expo. SME award recipients represent the highest levels of professionalism and expertise in the mining and minerals industry, with awards given for both individual and group achievements.

The 2026 SME Awards Celebration will take place on Wednesday, February 25 from 5:30 pm – 8:00 pm inside the Salt Lake Ballroom at the Hyatt Regency Salt Lake City. The event serves as a lively conclusion to mining's premier annual conference, is open to all attendees and is included with MINEXCHANGE registration. After a multimedia awards presentation, attendees will enjoy an intimate reception with the recipients and their awards, providing a final networking opportunity with the industry's best and brightest.

"I cannot imagine a better way to conclude MINEXCHANGE than by having an SME Awards Celebration," said Bill Hancock, 2025 SME President. "Recognizing innovation and excellence through our awards program is core to our mission and a testament to the remarkable members making a difference across the world."

Notable awards include:

- Charles F. Rand Memorial Gold Medal, presented to Lawrence P. Radford
- Mineral Economics Award, presented to Alan K. Stagg
- Mineral Industry Education Award, presented to Navid Mojtabai
- AIME Honorary Member Award, presented to S. Komar Kawatra and David L. Kanagy
- Erskine Ramsay Medal, presented to Stephen C. Tadolini
- Frank F. Aplan Award, presented to James E. Gebhardt
- Hal Williams Hardinge Award, presented to Rajesh Raitani
- Ivan B. Rahn Education Award, presented to Kramer D. Luxbacher
- James Douglas Gold Medal, presented to Kaixi Jiang
- John Fritz Medal, presented to Mau-Chung Frank Chang
- Robert E. Murray Innovation Award, presented to FLS
- Robert Earll McConnell Award, presented to Donald R. Taylor
- Robert H. Richards Award, presented to Robert E. McIvor
- Robert M. Dreyer Award, presented to Richard A. Leveille

- William Lawrence Saunders Gold Medal, presented to Jami Girard Dwyer
- Syd S. Peng and Felicia F. Peng Ground Control in Mining Award, presented to Dr. Michael Karmis
- President's Citation, presented to Sanja Zlatanic, Mary Korpi, and Kimberly Mills
- President's Section Citation, presented to the WAAIME Peru Section and the Gila Valley, AZ SME Local Section

For more information regarding the 2026 SME Awards Celebration and a full list of recipients, visit smeanualconference.org/awards.

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 sharing best practices for safety, environmental stewardship and moving mining forward. SME. *Inspiring mining professionals worldwide.*