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## Groups know that mining is boom-and-bust

by Bob Tammen

Dear Editor,

I worked in the mines. My brother worked in the mines. Several of my neighbors work in the mines.

My hope is that my neighbors children and grandchildren will have jobs in the taconite industry if they so desire, but the fact is, many of them have other desires. They've seen the boom and bust mining economy. They've probably attended the funeral of a relative who died with strangled lungs.

Mining groupies have managed to install a mining education program at Vermilion Community College. At an institution which usually registers around six hundred students, only 16 registered for mining. Only one of them was a woman. We hear a lot of talk about needing good mining jobs. We don't hear a lot of talk about the fact that custom and culture reserve those jobs for men and that not many of our young people actually want a mining career. They want decent paychecks but many of them, faced with the prospect of working in the mines or making a move, choose to move.

Acceptance of the boom-and-bust nature of mining is so widespread that we don't even hear mining sycophants deny the fact. This is remarkable from a group that will generate a talking point to defend every mining practice, no matter how putrid.

That's why it's so sad to read the Echo report on activities of the EADA. When our youth need an option to the mining industry, which is collapsing as you read these words, the EADA is putting on a show that could have been choreographed by a mining company lobbyist.

Economic development groups know that mining is boom-and-bust. They know the down turn will come. So, how did they prepare. Apparently they didn't. We need replacement jobs in counter-cyclical industries. Where are they.

Earlier I stated my support for the taconite industry. It needs an environmental clean up with adult supervision but it's viable.

The same is not true of the copper industry. The formation is less than one percent copper. By the time they add processing chemicals and buffering agents to the waste we'll probably be stuck with an amount of waste larger than the amount of ore they started with. When a promoter tells you about the huge size of the ore body you should picture an equivalent amount of waste that will bless our backyards long after the mine owners in Canada and the metal marketers in Switzerland have worked their financial alchemy with the profits from our natural resources.

The money that the IRRRB and the other alphabet organizations have spent promoting mining is wasted. The mines are closing down regardless. That money could have been dumped in front of Mike Motors or Zaverls and generated some real economic activity. Mining promotion is not the answer. Mining promotion is the problem.