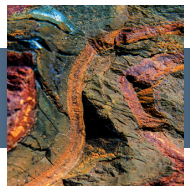
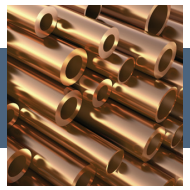
SME FOUNDATION





Volume 14, Issue 1

Newsletter

Spring 2026

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

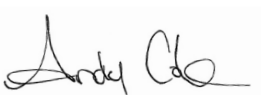
Thank you to the sponsors and attendees who joined us at the themed *Play with Purpose* Foundation Dinner and Silent Auction in Salt Lake City this year. More than 550 people attended the Gala to support the Foundation, participated in the silent auction, and helped kick off MINEXCHANGE 2026. The Silent Auction raised more than $38,000 for the PhD and Career Grant Program and culminated by awarding $150,000 in scholarships to 26 deserving recipients.

I would like to thank the outgoing SMEF Trustees—Marc Herpfer, Greg Hinshaw, Mary Korpi, Kurt Kost, and Melissa Harmon—for their years of service to the Foundation. Please join me in welcoming the new Trustees for the 2026-2029 term: Skylie Estep, Kurt Doran, Ben Hardman, Ronel Kappes, and Bill Hancock.

The Foundation continues to focus on improving collaboration with local SME Sections. It provides support to local sections in the form of a grant that helps fund attendance at your state science teacher conferences and provides MEC materials for distribution to teachers, students and the general public. Additionally, if your section would like a presentation from SMEF, please reach out to one of our Trustees or SMEF staff to make arrangements.

The Foundation raises funds for outreach programs for K-12 science classroom education, provides scholarships for students and supports programs needed to educate the public about the importance of mining in our everyday lives. Your continued support is appreciated. Please encourage your colleagues to support SMEF this year!

Andy Cole
SME Foundation President



SME Foundation Leadership

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K-12 KIT FOR SME SECTIONS ACTIVE IN OUTREACH

By Rebecca Smith

Denver students test the strength of sand construction in the Sandcastles/Tailings Activity prototyping

A toolkit was created through the K-12 Outreach Program piloted in Denver and Salt Lake City over the past few years. The physical kit includes 20 rock and mineral samples and a small set of items to use with the kit activities. The free downloadable PDF manual includes a draft letter of introduction for schools, four hands-on activities drafted and tested by a committee of MEC volunteers, a key to the rock and mineral samples, and a list of additional recommended resources.

The kits are being offered to SME Sections that are active in outreach to local K-12 classrooms. The PDF manual that accompanies the kit is available free for download from the MEC Presentation Resources for SME Sections page of the MEC website. Supplies of the materials are limited, and any interested Sections that are not able to receive a physical kit before they are all given out can either borrow one from another Section or obtain their own resources to use with the activities in the above-linked PDF in their local communities.

CALL FOR SPONSORS: SCOUTING AMERICA NATIONAL JAMBOREE

By Rebecca Smith and Chris Earnest

The SME Foundation is seeking sponsors to support outreach at the **Scouting America National Jamboree**, taking place **July 22–31, 2026**, at the **Summit Bechtel Reserve in West Virginia**. This nationwide event brings together nearly 10,000 Scouts for hands on learning and exploration. Through our outreach activities, we share educational materials that help Scouts understand where the minerals and materials they use every day come from and why mining is important.

Sponsor support helps MEC provide engaging resources that make learning about mining and minerals approachable and relevant, while also giving sponsors exposure to a large, national audience of youth and leaders involved in STEM and hands on education.

Thank you to our sponsors Core Natural Resources, WAAIME, JH Fletcher & Co and Conn Weld.

Sponsorships are available starting at $1,500. To learn more about supporting this important event, visit the Jamboree Events page at www.smefoundation.org or contact Megan Martin at martin@smenet.org.

CALL FOR SPONSORS: NSTA CONFERENCE OUTREACH (NOVEMBER 4–7, 2026)

MEC is seeking sponsors to support outreach at the **National Science Teaching Association (NSTA) National Conference on Science Education**, taking place **November 4–7, 2026, in Indianapolis, Indiana**. This major national event is one of the largest gatherings of K–12 science educators nationwide. Through our exhibit booth, we distribute **free rock and mineral sample kits**, along with educational handouts and posters, to help teachers show how classroom science connects to real world uses of mining and minerals.

Sponsor support helps MEC share engaging educational materials that teachers can use right away and makes it easier for students to understand how mining plays a role in everyday life. Sponsors also gain exposure to thousands of educators across the country who are shaping K-12 education.

Sponsorship levels include:

- Donating rock/mineral samples for use in the kits
- Sending employees to volunteer
- Company sponsorships of $2,500-$7,500.

For more information about sponsorship opportunities, please contact Megan Martin at martin@smenet.org.

ABET SPRING GOVERNANCE MEETING UPDATE

By Rick Honaker and David Hammond

SME ABET Affairs Committee Chair Rick Honaker and Vice-Chair David Hammond participated in the ABET Spring Governance virtual meetings on March 19–20, attending key delegation and commission sessions. Several important governance and policy updates were discussed:

- Jeffrey Keaton was approved to serve on the ABET Board of Directors (2026–2029).
- Donna Reese was elected 2026–27 President-Elect.
- A motion was advanced to standardize ANSAC's name as the Applied and Natural Science Accreditation Commission to resolve inconsistencies.
- The credential recognition program continues to grow, particularly in AI, cybersecurity, and mechatronics, with multiple credentials already awarded and additional reviews underway.
- ABET is moving toward eliminating curricular fees for participating societies, transitioning to a single $14,000 per-program governance fee.
- A proposed change to board representation would include international programs in determining seat allocations.
- Travel safety concerns in the Middle East may affect accreditation visits in the 2026-27 review cycle.
- Within EAC, concerns remain regarding the imbalance between academic and industry commissioners and an anticipated increase in review workload (up to 650 reviews projected in 2027–28, compared to 500 completed in the last cycle).
- An AI subcommittee has been formed to provide guidance on how AI can be used by ABET volunteers.

Finally, several program criteria updates were advanced including one for Chemical, Biochemical, Bimolecular Engineering programs. out for public comment, that requires faculty to be provided training or professional development on effective teaching and learning strategies. Eventually, this requirement may be added to the general criteria for all programs.

SME FOUNDATION 2025 TRUSTEE OF THE YEAR AWARD

The Society for Mining, Metallurgy & Exploration Inc. and its SME Foundation Board of Trustees are honored to recognize Michael T. Myers as the 2025 recipient of the SME Foundation Trustee of the Year Award. He is honored for his exemplary leadership, advocacy, and commitment to the SME Foundation.

Mr. Myers' impactful fundraising efforts, collaborative engagement as a Trustee, and highly visible dedication at both the local and national levels have made a lasting difference. This award recognizes his steadfast support and outstanding leadership in championing the mission of the SME Foundation.

PE COMMITTEE UPDATE: STRENGTHENING THE PE PIPELINE

By Andy Schissler

NCEES
advancing licensure for engineers and surveyors

The SME PE Committee held its annual business meeting and workshop in Salt Lake City in February 2026 along with a well-attended PE reception at the SME Annual Conference & Expo. Committee members also presented to Mining School Department Heads on the value of professional licensure and encouraged students to take the Fundamentals of Engineering (FE) exam while in school. "FE Bound" ribbons were also distributed to students at the conference.

The PE Committee focused its efforts on strategies to increase the number of licensed Professional Engineers (PEs). The shortage of Professional Engineers is impacting the United States. In 2007, across all engineering disciplines, 25,000 individuals took the PE exam. In 2025, that number increased to 30,000, representing an annual growth rate of 1.0%. For Mining and Mineral Processing (MMP), 47 individuals took the exam in 2008, compared to 57 last October, an annual growth rate of about 1.1%.

Across all measures of societal need for Professional Engineers, demand significantly exceeds the roughly 1% growth in supply. Design demands for mines, mills, roads, buildings, bridges, the electrical grid, and other infrastructure continue to grow. In mining specifically, demand for MMP PEs has increased substantially due to "critical" minerals, rare earth elements, precious metals, and other materials essential to an increasingly electronic society.

The SME PE Committee is working on the following initiatives:

1. Planting early interest in engineering via integrated educational systems at various pre-college levels.
2. Motivating college seniors to take the Fundamentals of Engineering exam while still in school.
3. Promoting industry recognition of the value of Professional Engineers in the workplace.
4. Identifying points in the career pipeline where Engineers-in-Training lose interest.
5. Working with NCEES to increase national and international license mobility.

SME FOUNDATION SILENT AUCTION RAISES MONEY FOR EDUCATION PROGRAMS

By Michelle Holmes

The SME Foundation hosted the 2026 SMEF Silent Auction in conjunction with the SMEF Gala Dinner at MINEXCHANGE in Salt Lake City. Thank you to **McCarl's Technical Services** for being the auction sponsor and thank you to everyone who bid; more than $38,000 was raised from the Silent Auction this year to help fund important Foundation programs!

Thank you to the following individuals and businesses that donated items for the auction:

Adventure Mining Company
Andy Cole
Anne Williamson
Art Schweizer
Barr Engineering Company
Beans & Brews Coffee House
Bill Hirt
Bob & Pam Washnock
Brooks and Nelson, LLC
Cami Prenn
Canary Systems, Inc.
Cat Joyner
Colorado Symphony
Core Natural Resources
Dale and Kathy Elifrits
Dave Goddard
Denver Museum of Nature and Science
Denver Zoo
Doug Silver
Epiroc
Eric Hikade
Eric Shereda
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First Majestic Silver Corp.
FLSmidth, Inc.
Fogo de Chão Churrascaria
Garland Davis
Gerry Austin (RTK Geology)
Gold Canyon Golf Resort & Spa
gorjana
Great Wolf Lodge
Greg Beckstrom
Greg Hinshaw
Greenbrier Hotel Corp. & Affiliates
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In-N-Out Burger
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Katie Robertson
Kendra Scott Jewelry
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Linda Schafer - GL Specialties
Lodge Casino
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Robert Mayville
Scott Lawson
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The Cheesecake Factory
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Tim and Liz Arnold
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Yard House

SME FOUNDATION

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what's new inside

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THANK YOU!

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The mission of the SME Foundation is to attract and leverage resources for a sustainable mining industry through education and outreach. Learn more at: