

MERIT BADGES

Dig It

"If it can't be grown, it has to be mined," says John Murphy, head of the advisory panel for the new **MINING IN SOCIETY MERIT BADGE**. The saying reminds us that mining is a pervasive and vital force in our society, not just something we might think about after a tragic mine accident.

Murphy, who spent nearly 40 years in mining-related activities for the U.S. Bureau of Mines and other organizations, now teaches at the University of Pittsburgh. He says Mining in Society fits well with the BSA's emphasis on skills careers. Mining in Society joins other career-focused merit badges like Welding, Surveying and Salesmanship.

Scouts earning the badge might be surprised to learn just how much mining affects their lives. A typical cellphone, the badge pamphlet reveals, contains up to 30 elements, including arsenic, copper, magnesium, platinum, silver, tungsten and other minerals that must be extracted from the earth.

The Mining in Society merit badge will launch this February at the annual meeting of the Society for Mining, Metallurgy and Exploration in Salt Lake City. Stay tuned to blog.scoutingmagazine.org for more information about this event.

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