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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Mining Workforce Study Shows Critical Need for Skilled Workers**

On January 5, 2012 the Society for Mining, Metallurgy and Exploration, in collaboration with the National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association, the National Mining Association and the Industrial Minerals Association North America, issued a report on emerging workforce trends in the U.S. mining industry.

The Department of Energy's National Energy Technology Laboratory contracted with the National Academies' National Research Council to perform a study, entitled "Emerging Workforce Trends in the U.S. Energy and Mining Industries" on the availability of skilled workers to meet the energy and mineral security requirements of the U.S. SME was asked by the National Research Council's Board on Higher Education and Workforce to collect, analyze and report on workforce trends in the U.S. mining industry.

SME's study included an analysis of:

- The need for and availability of workers for the non-fuel minerals industries;
- The availability of skilled labor at both entry level and more senior levels; and
- Recommendations for actions needed to meet future labor requirements.

In this report, SME provides historic and current trends in the size, growth, and demographics of the mining workforce; examines key labor market impediments and constraints of the mining workforce; discusses future demand for and supply of workers; identifies the need for education and training programs; discusses the potential for skilled foreign labor meeting projected labor requirements; assesses potential job health and safety impacts of a long-term workforce shortage; and described and evaluated data sources available, federal data collection and coordination, and future research initiatives on mining workforce issues.

"Although only one-quarter of one percent of the U.S. workforce (~350K) is employed by the mining industry, those industry workers contribute to the starting point for the value chain that regularly contributes between 10-14% to the Nation's economy," said SME Executive Director David L. Kanagy, in issuing the results of this study. "In order to continue to provide that significant value to the U.S. economy and meet the growing demand for minerals, the mining industry needs a huge influx of skilled and properly trained workers to offset the projected 52% loss of skilled senior labor in the next 15 years."

The report based on the results of SME's mining industry workforce study is available at:

<http://www.smenet.org/store/mining-books.cfm/Emerging-Workforce-Trends-in-the-US-Mining-Industry/GPAC-EWT>

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SME is a professional society (nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation) whose nearly 14,000 members represent all professionals serving the minerals industry in more than 85 countries. SME members are engineers, geologists, metallurgists, educators, students and researchers. SME advances the worldwide minerals community through information exchange and professional development.

*SME exists to be THE resource and advocate for the mining community.*

*For further details see: [www.immsoc.org](http://www.immsoc.org) and [www.smenet.org](http://www.smenet.org).*