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Oregon historical mining information available online

Portland, Oregon: The Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries is making available online the historical mine and commodities records of the Portland and Grants Pass offices. The Oregon Historical Mining Information (OHMI) archive, formerly available to the public at DOGAMI reference libraries, is now available as PDF files. The first part of this ongoing project includes small-dimension maps, letters, news clippings, photographs, and reports. Large-dimension mine maps are being scanned and will be added later. The agency plans to combine OHMI records with the GIS-based Mineral Information Layer for Oregon (MILO).

The Oregon Historical Mining Information archive can be accessed here: http://www.oregongeology.org/sub/milo/ohmi.htm

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Clark Niewendorp, DOGAMI Industrial Minerals Geologist who helped organize the project, notes, “This historical mining information is a connection to Oregon’s mining heritage. It’s also a fascinating record of the agency’s response to the World War II effort, a time when the U.S. needed additional mineral resources. These OHMI records, many one-of-a-kind reports and maps, can be useful for identifying safety hazards present at Abandoned Mined Lands sites.”

Niewendorp cautions that historical, underground gold, base metal (copper, lead, and zinc), and coal mines can pose a hazard if shafts or adits are still accessible to the public. People should stay out of underground mines—they are not like caves. Poisonous or bad air, explosive gases, unstable roofs, and flooded sections can pose lethal hazards. The national public awareness campaign “Stay Out! Stay Alive!” (http://www.msha.gov/sosa/SOSAhome.asp) provides more information on the dangers of abandoned and active mine sites.

The Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries is an independent agency of the State and has a broad responsibility in developing an understanding of the state’s geologic resources and natural hazards. The Department then makes this information available to communities and individuals to help inform and reduce the risks from natural hazards, such as earthquakes, tsunamis, landslides, floods and volcanic eruptions. The Department assists in the formulation of state policy where an understanding of geologic materials, geologic resources, processes, and hazards is key to decision-making. The Department is also the lead state regulatory agency for mining, oil, gas and geothermal exploration, production and reclamation.

Learn more about Oregon’s geology online: http://www.OregonGeology.org