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Cover photo by Todd France, photo right courtesy of Balfour Beatty



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Cover photo and right by Skip Peterson



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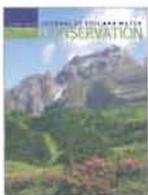
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On the Cover
View of the mountain
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Photo by Vaclav Volrab.



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Incorporating changes such as commodity prices, customer sales, fluctuating cost assumptions and newly acquired geologic data requires quick turnaround for model building and planning to keep mine plans on pace with changes as they occur. To meet these challenges, many companies have turned to computer software to help them with their mine planning process, page 39. The Pinto Valley concentrator of BHP Copper Inc. restarted its sulfide mining operations in 2007 and chose to meet demand by installing three flotation columns, page 43. And the always important issue of sustainability in mining was discussed at the 5th Annual Elko Roundtable, Brian Ulrich and Rick Frechette recap the discussion on page 52.



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The economic decline of 2009 was directly reflected in production and consumption of minerals, according to the USGS' "Mineral Commodity Summaries 2009." The greatest impact was in the states where most of the minerals are produced, which generally are in the West. Nevada may have felt the least impact, since its major mineral product, gold, tends to rise in value and demand when the economy is on the rocks. The No. 2 mineral-producing state, Arizona, was more impacted because its major product, copper, is more sensitive to activities such as home construction.

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What will the world look like in 2050? The cover illustrations are some of the predictions from a report titled "Vision 2050" from the World Business Council for Sustainable Development. This report, and a sustainability report from Caterpillar, are discussed in this month's cover article.

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