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Morton Salt stockpiles its product in stacks near the Great Salt Lake. Utah's salt mining industry has existed since Mormon pioneers discovered a wealth of the mineral when they arrived in Utah in the middle of the 19th century. Adobe stock photo.

Utah's Salt Mining Industry

A rich legacy and bright future

John Rogers
Business Journal

When you hear the words "mine" or "mining," you think dark underground tunnels or deep pits. But there's a mining industry in Utah that's a key driver of the state's economy but doesn't necessarily fit into the common definitions of mining activity.

Utah's salt mining industry has a rich history that stretches back over 150 years. But with several notable exceptions, it mostly takes place on the surface of Utah's landscape.

In addition to its place on our dinner table, salt is a critical component in numerous industries — from food preservation to road de-icing — and Utah has been a leading player in its production for more than a century. The state's vast salt deposits, particularly from the Great Salt Lake, have made it one of the top producers of salt in the United States.

History of Salt Mining in Utah

Salt mining in Utah dates back to the mid-1800s. The state's iconic Great Salt Lake, the largest saltwater

lake in the Western Hemisphere, has been central to the development of the salt industry. Early settlers discovered large deposits of salt around the lake and began harvesting it for use in food preservation, a critical need in the arid landscape where refrigeration was not an option.

In 1850, the Mormon settlers founded the first commercial salt works in the region, producing salt primarily for local consumption. By the late 19th century, the state's salt industry had grown substantially, at-



tracting national and international interest. As the transportation network expanded, particularly with the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869, the shipping of salt from Utah became more viable, opening up new markets.

The discovery of other large salt deposits, such as those found in the

underground mines of the Paradox Basin in southeastern Utah and the pink salt mined by the Real Salt Co. near Redmond in Sevier County, further bolstered the industry. Industry leaders estimate these underground deposits have been in place for tens of millions of years.

Major Players

Today, several companies dominate Utah's salt production landscape, with operations that include both surface mining and salt extraction from underground deposits. These companies operate some of the largest salt production facilities in the United States.

One of the most prominent players in Utah's salt mining industry is Intrepid Potash, a company that operates both potash and salt mines. Intrepid's salt production comes from its

Intrepid Potash Inc.

operation in the Paradox Basin. The company is one of the largest producers of potash and salt in the U.S., and it primarily uses solution mining methods to extract salt from brine deposits.

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MINING SERVICE PROVIDERS

Listed Alphabetically

BUSINESS JOURNAL **List**

Company Name	Contact Info.	Services Provided
ACF West Inc.	acfwest.com 800-804-1393	Geosynthetic solutions
Ames Construction Inc.	amesconstruction.com 801-977-8012	Heavy civil & industrial construction
Atkinson Construction	atkn.com 303-985-1660	Heavy civil & industrial construction
Barney Trucking	barneytrucking.com 800-524-7930	Trucking services
Barr Engineering	barr.com 801-333-8400	Engineering & environmental consulting
Boart Longyear	boartlongyear.com 801-972-6430	Drilling equipment & service
Bodell Construction	bodellconstruction.com 801-261-4343	Innovative mining construction services
Bowen Collins & Associates	bowencollins.com 801-495-2224	Engineering & environmental consulting
Brahma Group Inc.	brahmagroupinc.com 801-521-5200	Industrial construction & project management
Brunel	brunel.net 801-987-5946	Recruitment & workforce solutions
C&G Construction	cgconst.com 435-882-1529	Civil construction, excavation, steel erection
Cumberland Surety Inc.	cumberlandsurety.com 800-767-8622	Insurance, underwriting, surety bonds
Dark Horse Timber	darkhorsetimber.com 435-525-1012	Mining timbers, lumber services
DC Power Solutions	dcpower.cc 800-326-0691	Large battery sales & service
Dorsey & Whitney	dorsey.com 801-933-7360	Legal services—natural resources practice
DP Systems	dpindustrialinc.com 801-886-2170	Industrial scaffolding, insulation, siding
Duff and Phelps	duffandphelps.com 415-693-5367	Corp. finance, valuation, advisory services
Dyno Nobel	dynonobel.com 801-364-4800	Blasting products & solutions
Em Strategies Inc.	emstrats.com 775-826-8822	Environmental consulting
Epiroc LLC	epiroc.com 844-437-4762	Equipment distribution & service
ERM-Rocky Mountain	erm.com 801-204-4300	Environmental, health, safety consulting
Fabian Vancott	fabianvancott.com 801-531-8900	Legal services, natural resources practice
FLSmith	flsmith.com 801-871-7000	Production facilities, equipment, services
GeoStrata	geostrata-llc.com 801-501-0584	Engineering & geoscience services
Geotemps Inc.	geotemps.com 775-746-7146	Recruitment & workforce solutions
Gerhart Cole	gerhartcole.com 801-849-0055	Geotechnical engineering
Golden West Industries Inc.	goldenwest-industries.com 435-637-5402	Chemical solutions for mining, materials handling
Golder Associates	golder.com 801-312-9320	Consulting, design, construction services
HDR Inc.	hdrinc.com 801-743-7800	Engineering, architecture, environmental services
Holland & Hart	hollandhart.com 801-799-5826	Legal services, natural resources practice
Hunt Electric	hunteletric.com 801-975-8844	Electrical contractor
ICM Solutions	wheelercat.com 801-978-1432	Crushing and paving products
Industrial Supply	indsupply.com 801-484-8644	Industrial supplies, MROP materials
Ingenium Design	ingeniumdesign.us 801-413-7672	Engineering & design services
Jennmar Services	jennmarservices.jobs 435-637-9300	Recruitment & workforce solutions
Job Industrial Services Inc.	jobindustrial.com 801-433-0901	Engineering, procurement, construction mgmt.
Komatsu Equipment Co.	komatsueq.com 877-566-2878	Equipment distribution & service
Komatsu Mining	mining.komatsu 435-636-6100	Equipment distribution & service
Liebherr USA Co.	liebherr.com 307-686-0948	Equipment distribution & service
Magnum Development	magnumdev.com 801-993-7001	Chemical, gas storage, clean energy storage

Company Name	Contact Info.	Services Provided
McNeil Engineering	mcneilengineering.com 801-255-7700	Civil engineering & design services
Milex Technologies	milextech.com 775-340-4942	Light tower & custom equipment manufacturer
Millcreek Engineering Co.	millcreekeng.com 801-904-2260	Engineering & construction management
Monsen Engineering	monsenengineering.com 800-821-0672	Product supply for design/build industry
North American Coal	nacoal.com 972-448-5400	Contract mining; technical, environmental & material handling solutions
NOW CFO	nowcfo.com 801-598-9390	Outsourced CFO, controller, accounting services
Parr Brown Gee & Loveless	parrbrown.com 801-532-7840	Legal services, natural resources practice
Parsons Behle & Latimer	parsonsbehle.com 801-532-1234	Legal services, natural resources practice
Pray and Co.	praysolutions.com 775-934-9308	Human resources, PR, org. effectiveness solutions
Ray Quinney & Nebeker	rqn.com 801-532-1500	Legal services, natural resources practice
Richwood Industries	richwood.com 800-237-6951	Bulk handling equipment distribution & service
Robinson Transport Inc.	haulcoal.com 435-529-7472	Trucking services
Rocky Mountain Industrial	rmiwyoming.com 307-472-5519	Flame-resistant & winter clothing, PPE supply
Savage Services Corp.	savageservices.com 801-944-6600	Transportation, logistics, operations services
Sapphire Gas Solutions	sapphiregassolutions.com 833-MOBLGAS	Mobile power generation solutions
SITECH Intermountain	sitech-im.com 801-978-1619	Mining/construction technology systems
Smith Power Products	smithpowerproducts.com 800-658-5352	Equipment, engine rebuild & service
Snell & Wilmer	swlaw.com 801-257-1900	Legal services, natural resources practice
Stantec Consulting	stantec.com 801-617-3200	Engineering, architecture, project mgmt. services
Stoel Rives LLP	stoel.com 801-328-3131	Legal services, natural resources practice
Strata Worldwide	strataworldwide.com 800-691-6601	Advanced mining safety solutions
Sure Steel	suresteel.com 801-675-8311	Supply and installation of structural steel
SWCA Inc.	swca.com 801-322-4307	Environmental consulting
TIC-The Industrial Co.	tic-inc.com 303-325-0300	Heavy civil & industrial construction
Tierra Group International	tierragroupinternational.com 801-210-9600	Civil & geotechnical engineering
Tram Electric Inc.	tramelectric.com 435-637-7291	Electric motor rebuild & service
Turner Mining Group	turnermining.com 812-277-9077	Contract mining, overburden removal, drill/blast, crushing & screening, specialty earthworks, plant staffing
Utah Metal Works	umw.com 877-221-0099	Industrial scrap & recycling services
VCI	govci.com 914-381-0000	Heavy industry research, advisory, investment serv.
Victaulic	victaulic.com 610-559-3300	Mechanical pipe joining solutions
W.W. Clyde & Company	wwclyde.net 801-802-6800	Heavy civil & industrial construction
Wagstaff Crane Service	wagstaffcrane.com 801-277-3820	Crane service & engineering
Wanzek Construction	wanzek.com 701-282-6171	Heavy civil & industrial construction
WESCO	wesco.com 801-975-0600	Industrial supply chain solutions
Western Cultural Resource Management	wcrminc.com 303-449-1151	Cultural resource consulting services
Wheeler Machinery Co.	wheelercat.com 801-796-8333	Equipment distribution & service
Wollam Construction Co.	wollamconstruction.com 801-938-9170	Heavy civil & industrial construction
Zooks Solutions Inc.	zookssolutions.com 888-772-4613	Recruitment & workforce solutions



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Now, more than ever, we advocate for Utah's mine operations and service partners. We are proud of Utah's record of safe, environmentally friendly mining practices, and we recognize the tremendous economic impact the industry has in Utah and beyond.

utahmining.org

MINERAL MINES

Listed Alphabetically

BUSINESS JOURNAL List

Mine Name	Commodity	Mine Location	Mining Method	Owner	Year Opened
American Gilsonite	Gilsonite	Near Vernal, Uintah Co.	Sub-surface	American Gilsonite	1904
Ash Grove	Portland cement products	Leamington, Millard Co.	Surface	Ash Grove Cement Co.	1980
Cricket Mountain	Limestone, limestone products	Near Delta, Millard Co.	Surface	Graymont Corp.	*
Devil's Slide	Limestone, cement products	East of Morgan, Morgan Co.	Surface	Holcim Inc.	1904
Enefit American	Oil shale	Uinta Basin, Uintah Co.	Surface	Enefit American Oil	*
Grantsville Facility	Limestone, limestone products	Grantsville, Tooele Co.	Surface	Lhoist North America	*
Great Salt Lake Minerals	Sulfate of potash, magnesium chloride	Great Salt Lake, Tooele Co.	Solar evaporation	Compass Minerals	1972
Moab Facility	Potash	Near Moab, Kane Co.	Solar evaporation	Intrepid Potash Inc.	1965
Morton Salt	Salt	Great Salt Lake, Tooele Co.	Solar evaporation	Morton Salt	*
Red Leaf Resources	Oil shale	Uinta Basin, Uintah Co.	Surface	Red Leaf Resources Inc.	*
Redmond Mine	Salt, bentonite	Redmond, Sevier Co.	Underground, surface	Redmond Minerals	1958
Sevier Playa	Potash	Sevier Dry Lake, Millard Co.	Solar evaporation	EMR Capital Investments	*
Simplot Vernal Mine	Phosphates and derivatives	Near Vernal, Uintah Co.	Surface	J.R. Simplot Co.	1960
Timple Facility	Salt	Great Salt Lake, Tooele Co.	Solar evaporation	Cargil Salt Inc.	*
US Gypsum	Gypsum	Sigurd, Sevier Co.	Surface	US Gypsum	*
Utelite Mine	Expanded shale	Coalville, Summit Co.	Surface	Utelite Corp.	1962
Wendover Facility	Potash	Great Salt Lake, Tooele Co.	Solar evaporation	Intrepid Potash Inc.	1938
Western Clay	Bentonite	Aurora, Sevier Co.	Surface	Western Clay Corp.	1963



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Nineteenth century miners bring a train of gold-ore-laden tram cars out of a mine near Park City. Photo courtesy Park City Museum.

THERE'S GOLD IN THEM- THAR (UTAH) HILLS

The state wasn't exempt from the gold fever of the 19th century and we're still bringing the precious stuff out of our mountains and canyons

John Rogers
Business Journal

When you fly over the massive Rio Tinto Kennecott copper mine in southwest Salt Lake County, you don't normally think of gold — you think of copper. But that giant pit produces a significant amount of the precious metal sought by man since the dawn of civilization.

Gold mining has been a cornerstone of Utah's economy since the mid-1800s, shaping the state's history and many of its towns. From the first discoveries in the Utah Territory to today's advanced mining operations, gold has remained an integral part of Utah's heritage and economy. While modern gold mining is far more sophisticated than the prospecting days of the 19th century, the echoes of the past still resonate in the towns and mines that continue to shape the state's mining culture.

First Gold Rush

Gold was first discovered in

Utah in 1848 by a group of settlers that were part of the westward migration of members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints — the Mormons. They found gold in what is now known as Dry Fork Canyon, near the site of the former town of Bingham Canyon, located southwest of Salt Lake City. However, the discovery didn't lead to a rush of miners at the time, as the gold found was not abundant enough to spark the kind of frenzy seen in other parts of the West. It wasn't until 1863, when large gold deposits were uncovered in the Oquirrh Mountains, that Utah's gold mining industry began to take shape.

The discovery in the Oquirrh Mountains spurred the first major gold rush in Utah, attracting miners from all over the country. Small mining camps quickly sprung up, and towns like Bingham Canyon, Park City and Silver Reef became bustling hubs of activity. Bingham Canyon, now home to the Kennecott copper

mine, was one of the earliest sites of substantial gold mining. The town's population swelled with miners, and in 1863, gold was officially mined from the area, marking the start of Utah's golden era.

At the same time, Park City, located in Summit County east of Salt Lake City, gained prominence as a mining town when silver was discovered in 1868. Although silver was the dominant metal mined there, gold was also found in significant amounts, contributing to the town's wealth. By the late 1800s, Park City had transformed into a major mining town with its own smelter, hotels and businesses catering to miners and their families.

Towns, Railroads and Prosperity

As the 19th century wore on, gold mining in Utah expanded. The discovery of additional gold veins, particularly in Eureka (named for the Greek word for "I found it") added to the rush. The advent of railroads in the 1870s made it easier to transport

both gold and miners to the sites, spurring further economic growth.

Eureka, located in Juab County, became a central gold mining town after the discovery at the Eureka Hill gold mine in 1872. By the turn of the century, it had grown to a population of around 5,000 people. The city, with its wealth drawn from both gold and silver, boasted of hotels, saloons and stores to support its vibrant mining economy.

Despite a steady influx of miners and a number of successful gold strikes, the industry was often marked by boom-and-bust cycles, a pattern seen in many of Utah's mining towns. As ore supplies diminished or gold prices fluctuated, many mining operations faced economic hardships. This volatility led to the decline of several towns, with many residents leaving when the mining activity slowed.

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COAL MINES

Ranked by Short Tons Produced in 2023

BUSINESS JOURNAL **List**

Mine	County	Coal Field	Company	Thousand Short Tons Produced 2023
1 Skyline No. 3	Carbon/Emery/Sanpete	Wasatch Plateau	Wolverine Fuels	2,786
2 SUFCO	Sevier	Wasatch Plateau	Wolverine Fuels	2,691
3 Emery	Emery	Emery	Bronco Utah Operations	798
4 Gentry Mountain No. 4	Emery	Emery	Gentry Mining	417
5 Lila Canyon Mine	Emery	Book Cliffs	American Consolidated Natural Resources	159
6 Coal Hollow Mine	Kane	Alton	Alton Coal Development	67
7 Castle Valley No. 3	Emery	Emery	Gentry Mining	*
7 Dugout Canyon Mine	Carbon	Book Cliffs	Wolverine Fuels	*

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METAL MINES

Listed Alphabetically

BUSINESS JOURNAL **List**

Mine Name	Commodity	Mine Location	Mining Method	Owner	Year Opened
Bingham Canyon Mine	Copper, gold, silver, molybdenum	Bingham Canyon, Salt Lake Co.	Surface	Rio Tinto Kennecott	1906
Deer Trail Mine	Silver, gold, lead, zinc	Marysville, Piute Co.	Underground	DT Mining/Mag Silver	2020
Gold Springs Project	Gold, silver	Great Basin, NV and UT	Surface	Gold Springs Resources	2020
Henry Mountains Complex (Tony M & Bullfrog mines)	Uranium	Henry Mountains, Garfield Co.	Underground	Energy Fuels Inc.	*
La Sal Complex (Beaver & Pandora mines)	Uranium, vanadium	La Sal Mountains, San Juan Co.	Underground	Energy Fuels Inc.	*
Lisbon Valley Mine	Copper	Lisbon Valley, San Juan Co.	Surface	Lisbon Valley Mining Co.	2004
Spor Mountain Mine	Beryllium	Spor Mountain, Juab Co.	Surface	Materion Natural Resources	1968
Tintic Project	Gold, Silver, Lead, Zinc	Tintic District; Utah/Juab Counties	Underground Osisko Development/Tintic Consolidated Metals	Tamra Mining Co. LLC	2020
US Magnesium Facility	Magnesium	Great Salt Lake, Tooele Co.	Solar evaporation	US Magnesium LLC	1972
White Mesa Mill Facility	Uranium, vanadium, alternative feeds	Blanding, San Juan Co.	Mill	Energy Fuels Inc.	1980

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SALT MINING

from page 13

In 2023, Intrepid reported producing approximately 3.7 million tons of salt across its operations in Utah. The company's facilities are critical not only for salt production but also for creating byproducts like magnesium chloride, which is used for road de-icing during the winter months.

Morton Salt. Another major player is Morton Salt, a subsidiary of the international chemical giant K+S. Morton Salt is one of the largest salt producers in North America and it operates a number of salt mines, including one in the Salt Lake Valley. The company's operation in the region is primarily focused on producing solar salt — salt that is extracted through evaporation from the Great Salt Lake.

Morton Salt produces an estimated 1.6 million tons of salt annually in Utah, with the majority going toward de-icing, industrial use and consumer table salt. Morton's solar evaporation ponds, which cover thousands of acres of land, are a key component of its operations in Utah.

United Salt Corp. United Salt operates the largest underground salt mine in the western United States, the Salt Lake Mine, located near the Great Salt Lake. United Salt's mining techniques focus on traditional underground room-and-pillar mining, which allows the company to extract salt

with minimal environmental disruption.

United Salt produces millions of tons of salt each year, focusing primarily on industrial uses, including salt for water softeners, chemical production and agricultural applications. The company's salt is distributed throughout the U.S. and internationally.

Economic Significance of Salt Mining

Salt mining is a significant contributor to Utah's economy. The state ranks as one of the top salt producers in the U.S., with an annual production of around 12 million tons of salt, valued at more than \$1 billion. Salt mining directly supports thousands of jobs in the state, from the miners and equipment operators to the employees involved in transportation, marketing and distribution.

Beyond direct employment, the salt industry generates additional economic activity in related sectors, such as logistics and chemicals. For instance, the de-icing industry alone accounts for a substantial portion of Utah's salt output. The U.S. Department of Transportation estimates that millions of tons of salt are used each year to keep roads clear of ice during winter months, with much of it sourced from Utah's mines.

Additionally, the high-quality salt extracted in Utah is used in the manufacturing of chemicals such as chlorine, sodium hydroxide and caustic soda, which are essential for industries

like water treatment, pharmaceuticals and plastics. The salt industry's products also play a key role in agriculture and food production.

Environmental Impact

While salt mining is a vital industry for Utah, it does have some environmental implications. The extraction methods, whether from underground mines or surface evaporation ponds, can affect local ecosystems. For instance, solar evaporation ponds, while relatively low impact compared to other mining techniques, consume large amounts of water, a precious resource in the arid Utah climate. The use of brine in solution mining also has the potential to impact surrounding groundwater and surface water quality if not managed properly.

Additionally, road de-icing, a major consumer of salt, can result in runoff that affects local water bodies. High concentrations of salt in freshwater systems can harm aquatic life by increasing salinity levels, potentially disrupting ecosystems. Some salt mining companies have worked to mitigate these issues by implementing more sustainable practices, such as recycling water in the evaporation process or using alternative de-icing chemicals.

Looking Ahead

The outlook for Utah's salt mining industry remains positive, according to those who extract the chemical and a living from its abundance. The continued demand for salt for food applica-

tions, de-icing, water softening and industrial purposes ensures that Utah's salt operations will remain essential for both the state and the nation.

There is also a growing interest in the use of salt for new technologies, such as energy storage and carbon capture, which could open new markets for Utah's abundant salt reserves. Researchers are exploring the use of salt as a key material for large-scale battery storage systems, which could contribute to the growing renewable energy sector. If these innovations take off, they could provide additional growth opportunities for Utah's salt industry.

Due to technological advancements, there are also new ways to mitigate environmental impact, industry sources say. Companies are increasingly adopting sustainability initiatives, including reducing water usage in mining operations and exploring more eco-friendly methods of salt extraction and processing. With stricter environmental regulations and greater public awareness, the industry is likely to continue evolving toward more responsible practices.

With major players like Intrepid Potash, Morton Salt and United Salt, Utah is a leading producer of salt in the United States. Looking ahead, the industry's potential growth, fueled by technological innovations and sustainable practices, promises to continue to play its important role in Utah's economy for many years to come.

GOLD

from page 17

Gold Mining in the 20th Century

In the early 20th century, Utah's gold mining industry faced stiff competition from other regions of the United States, such as neighboring Nevada, which became known for its large gold deposits. While gold continued to be mined in Utah, especially in areas like Bingham Canyon and

Park City, the state's attention shifted increasingly toward other minerals, particularly copper and silver. These metals dominated Utah's mining industry for much of the 20th century.

By the mid-1900s, many of the older gold mines had closed, and Utah's gold production had significantly diminished. However, interest in the state's gold resources was rekindled in the 1980s as the global price of gold began to rise, sparking a new wave of mining activity.

Today, gold mining in Utah is much more sophisticated, employing advanced techniques such as cyanide heap leaching, which allows for the extraction of gold from low-grade ores that were previously not worth mining.

While gold mining in Utah is no longer as widespread as it once was, there are still active gold mines in operation. The Bingham Canyon Mine produces a significant amount of gold. The mine's operator, Rio Tinto, recovers gold as a byproduct of copper extraction. The mine has been in operation since the early 1900s and continues to produce substantial quantities of both copper and gold, as well as silver and other metals.

Another major site for gold mining today is the Goldstrike Mine northwest of St. George, which is owned by the Barrick Gold Corp., one of the world's largest gold mining companies. The Goldstrike Mine primarily produces gold through heap leaching processes. The operation involves low-grade ores, further demonstrating the evolving methods of gold extraction in modern times.

According to the Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining, gold production in the state in 2022 was estimated to be around 100,000 ounces, contributing significantly to the local economy. The mining of gold continues to support jobs in the region, both directly in the mines and in support industries, such as transportation, equipment manufacturing and local service providers. The Utah Department of Workforce Services estimates that the mining industry as a whole contributes more than \$3 billion annually to

the state's economy.

For towns like Eureka, the presence of gold mining operations is still a major economic driver. Local businesses, from equipment suppliers to hospitality services, benefit from the mining activities.

"Gold mining is an important part of our state's heritage, and it's still creating jobs and economic growth today," said Tom Brown, CEO of Goldstrike Mining. "The technology we use now allows us to extract gold more efficiently and responsibly than ever before. The benefits to the local economy are significant, and we are committed to supporting the community while ensuring sustainable practices."

Environmental Challenges

While modern gold mining brings economic benefits, it also comes with environmental challenges. The use of cyanide in gold extraction has been controversial and environmental groups have raised concerns about the potential for contamination of water supplies and the long-term health of local ecosystems. The mining industry has taken steps to address these concerns, including increased regulation and adoption of more sustainable mining practices.

Utah's gold mining industry has undergone significant changes since the first discoveries in the 1840s, transitioning from small-scale operations to sophisticated modern enterprises. While the gold rush days are long gone, Utah's gold mines continue to play an important role in the state's economy, providing jobs and contributing to the local and statewide economies.

