

Molycorp celebrates 'resurgence' at San Bernardino mine

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Colorado-based Molycorp Inc. later this month will celebrate the launch of a plan to reinvigorate rare-earths mining in its Mountain Pass Mine in eastern San Bernardino County.

Rare earths, elements used to manufacture everything from cell phones, hybrid cars, military systems and computers, were mined for years at Mountain Pass, but mining ceased in 2002 amid environmental problems and low-cost competition from China.

With worldwide demand for rare earths increasing, Molycorp broke ground late last year on a new manufacturing plant at the mine and has restarted active mining with plans to ramp up production to nearly 20,000 metric tons a year in 2012, and 40,000 by the end of 2013. The company also is partnering on a deal to use a portion of its output to manufacture magnets.

A groundbreaking celebration and barbecue is scheduled for April 20 at the mine.