

California mines reap \$3.4 billion in 2009

Mark Glover, Sacramento Bee, 6-9-11

California ranked fourth nationally in the production of non-fuel minerals in 2009, according to the latest statistics released by the California Geological Survey and the U.S. Geological Survey.

California's 700 active mines, which employ about 5,300 people, produced minerals valued at \$3.4 billion in 2009, down from the 2008 total of \$4 billion.

California's production accounted for 6.3 percent of the nation's total. About 25 industrial minerals made up most of the total production value.

Gold and silver were the only metals produced in California. Gold production was valued at \$139 million – ranking California sixth among 11 states reporting production for the third straight year.

"Although California is still the Golden State, there are only a couple of large active gold mines here," said John Parrish, state geologist of California and head of the California Geological Survey. "Even with the price of gold in the \$1,500-per-ounce range, the investment in time and money to open a large-scale operation is rather daunting."