

## WYOMING'S MINING INDUSTRY

By J.F. Ratchye

**W** Wyoming's mineral industry is the economic backbone of the Equality State, as will be obvious to readers of the Casper Star Tribune's first annual "Wyoming's Pulse of Progress" edition. The state's mineral industry consists of oil and gas production and producing the minerals represented by the membership of the Wyoming Mining Association, i.e., bentonite, coal, trona and uranium.

mental field and the development of foreign markets. In 1990, 508 employees produced 2.5 million tons of bentonite from 9 mines and 11 mills in Wyoming.

Wyoming also leads the nation in the production of coal. The bulk of Wyoming's coal comes from thick seams of low

to continue to do so in due primarily to the twin facts that it is inexpensive and complies with the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990. In 1990, Wyoming led the nation in coal production for the third year with a record setting 184 million tons. 4,623 industry employees produced this coal from 30 mines in the Equality State.

Wyoming produces all of the nation's soda ash in Sweetwater County. The trona is mined underground and processed into soda ash and other sodium based products on site. Markets for soda ash have been strong in recent years and production set a record in 1990.

Domestic markets have increased due to the fact that soda ash can be used as a substitute for caustic soda and caustic soda is also produced from soda ash to satisfy this same market. The increases in domestic consumption of soda ash primarily for glass, detergents and other industrial uses have helped overcome the decrease in the export market. Wyoming's trona miners have announced increases in capacity and facilities to manufacture new products in the recent past and they look forward to an improving market for their natural soda ash. In 1990 five



The Wyoming bentonite industry leads the nation in the production of high sodium bentonite. Markets for this clay mineral consist of oil well drilling, together with many other miscellaneous uses. Wyoming's bentonite industry leads the nation and will continue to do so for many years to come. The industry has suffered through some slow years but is coming back slowly with new uses in the environ-

sulfur sub-bituminous coal that is highly marketable in this day of environmental awareness. Since 1970, coal tonnage has increased almost every year and is projected

*continued on page 22*

## Mining Industry Stats

Clipped By:



seabix1

Sun, May 3, 2020