

## MINING-FOCUSED EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES EXPAND IN NORTHERN MINNESOTA

Minnesota students interested in pursuing a career in mining or mining-related fields now have more high quality education opportunities to choose from.



Last month, the Mesabi Range College in Virginia dedicated its newest building, the “Tom Rukavina Engineering Center,” named after the former Iron Range legislator who was a strong advocate for higher education, and was instrumental in securing additional annual funding from taconite taxes to be used for rebuilding and improving Iron Range schools. The new building will be used as part of the Iron Range Engineering education model which began in January 2010. The program utilizes a project-based teaching method where students get hands-on real industry experience in their third and fourth years of their engineering education. The program is a collaborative effort between the Itasca Community College and Minnesota State University.

In addition, the University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD) recently announced their forthcoming Mineral Resources Center (MRC), their new educational program. The MRC is being created to help meet the growing demand for skilled mining workers in the state. The MRC will provide students with a full understanding of the mining cycle, no matter which area they specialize in. Students will be trained in exploration, processing, reclamation and other core mining disciplines so that they graduate with a holistic understanding of mining. UMD has been planning the new center for five years and it will open within the next year or two.

With a variety of proposed mining projects in northern Minnesota, the demand for well-paying mining jobs will increase. Twin Metals’ proposed underground copper-nickel mining project alone is estimated to create thousands of direct and spin-off jobs once it becomes operational. These education programs are essential to creating the future workforce necessary for the many mining-related jobs that will become available in the coming years.

**Sources:**

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