

## **What Research Can Deliver for Industry**

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From the 1950s to the early 1970s, the mineral industry was heavily involved in applied research and development (R&D) through in-house research groups, support of national geological surveys, and partnerships with individual academic economic geologists, geochemists, and geophysicists. While several mining companies still maintain small research groups, primarily in geophysics or geochemistry, research, if done at all, is generally conducted through support of multicompany academic research efforts such as those of AMIRA. These programs commonly attract government funding in Australia and Canada and increasingly in Europe, but not in the U.S.

While most geoscientists in industry or academia would say that research is “good” and helps the industry, has this really proved to be true? This talk will utilize available data and information from a variety of individuals in industry, government, and academia to examine the current extent of industry involvement with research. It will also look at whether the investments made by industry have provided significant benefits. It is hoped that data are available to indicate whether research in traditional geoscience areas has been more important than research results “borrowed” from other industries and technologies.

Given shrinking industry budgets for anything not directly tied to operational cost reduction, shrinking funding of almost all geoscience research by most governments around the world, and a shrinking academic focus on mining-related research due to the lack of research funds, it is pertinent to examine whether geoscience research in the mining sector will be important in the 21<sup>st</sup> century or whether the industry will rely more on research from other industries. If industry is to rely increasingly on outside research developments, who will bring these developments to the mining sector if the academic basis of economic geology and allied fields disappears from academia?