

**SALT MINING IN NEW YORK:
The Ins and Outs of the Solution Mining Industry and
Its Significance**

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ABSTRACT

The salt mining industry has prospered in New York State since 1878 when commercial quantities of subsurface rock salt were inadvertently discovered at a well drilled for oil and gas. Both conventional hard rock mining (room and pillar) and solution mining (well injection) methods have been in use continuously for over one hundred years to recover the state's expansive subsurface salt deposits.

The salt industry is important because it provides an essential commodity, and employment either directly or indirectly for thousands of New Yorkers. In 1995, New York salt production ranked first in the United States in value at 185 million dollars and third in tonnage mined at 4.9 million short tons. Conventional mining accounted for 64 percent of salt mined in New York, with solution mining used to recover the remaining 36 percent. The two distinctly different mining methods are used in New York because of the need for unique end products. In 1996 production of salt by the solution mining method will in all likelihood surpass salt output by conventional means, primarily due to Retsof mine closure in September 1995.

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