

Agency changes with the times

Though the mission of the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Agency (the Agency) to diversify the economy of northeastern Minnesota has remained constant since the Agency's founding in 1941, the tactics used to help achieve diversification have varied. Largely, these efforts have reflected the times. In the 1940s for instance, the Agency focused on taconite development and mining research. In the 1960s, business development was an important tool employed by the Agency.

Today, the Agency's efforts are more varied than ever. While mining and timber continue to receive important research dollars, the agency is focused on areas like tourism, mineland reclamation, business development and technology.

The following chart details some of the many projects that the Agency has implemented over the years, while highlighting some of the resulting trends. We invite you to examine it and gain a deeper understanding of the Iron Range and the Agency.

Comsr.	Gov.	Year	Mining	Forestry	Mineland Reclamation	Economic Development	Tourism	Technology	Other
Stassen	Thye	41	Geological Survey; Taconite study/research; Lignite/sponge iron			Water survey; Vocational Ed classes (WWII)			
		42	County land use program; Land classification and timber inventory and management (Co-op)						
Thye	Youngdahl	43	Labor study; Powdered iron study; IRRRC report on low grade ore/taxes	Land use study (Co-op); Water Resource Survey started; Farm Forestry Education Program	Peat Inventory; Nurses' training; Crop surveys				
		44							
Thye	Anderson	45	Iron powder construction — Aurora	Professional Forestry Staff on board; Tree Planting Program began	Rutabaga canning plant				
		46							
Thye	Freeman	47	Manganiferous low grade ore studies	Land use programs	Arrow shirt plant; Hardboard plant (Duluth); Cedar Products (Deer River); Peat for heat project; Transportation study; Arrowhead Seed Growers (Cook); Potato Warehouse (Embarrass)				
		48	First forest aerial surveys (Co-op)						
Thye	Freeman	49	Topographic mapping program started (Co-op)						
		50	School education programs; Aspen for veneer/plywood study; Aerial photographs purchased for timber inventory	Chun King loan	Geologic maps of northern Minnesota; Trade school survey				
Thye	Freeman	51	Section Corner Restoration program (Co-op)						
		52	Clay (mail) study	Nu-Ply plant (Bemidji)	Chisholm peat plant; Small fruits project				
Thye	Freeman	53	Aspen Site Study						
		54	Peat/taconite research						
Thye	Freeman	55	Reserve Mining Company completed; Iron ore survey	Topographic studies; Forestry research; Army Worm Research	Duluth Port Survey	Statewide Resources Conference			
		56	Charcoal research	Maple Syrup Plant; McGregor Plant (Ohio, furniture)			Farm income study		
Thye	Freeman	57	Erie's (LTV Steel) first shipment	Forestry Utilization and Marketing Program started					
		58	Taconite/mineral drilling; Pig iron study; Steel making study	Timber Pricing Report	Statewide Resources Conference; Cuyuna Range study		Tourism study		
Thye	Freeman	59	Third Minnesota Forest Survey; Public Land Ownership Maps; Wood Industry Survey						
		60	Reserve Mining Company Expansion	Land inventories	Lookout Mountain loan	Minnesota Resources Conference; Recreation Area Grant (Carey Lake)			
Thye	Freeman	61	Multiply plant (Virginia)						
		62	Comprehensive survey of forest resources completed						
Thye	Freeman	63	Land ownership maps program covering 21 counties instituted						
		64							
Thye	Freeman	65	Eveleth Mines plant completed; Reserve Mining Expansion	4-H Camp; Minnesota Arrowhead Association Study					
		66	Total of \$2.8 million for iron ore research	Total of \$3.6 million for forestry	Rajala Timber Company loan	Wild Rice Project; Coho Salmon Fishery			
Thye	Freeman	67	Butler Taconite Plant completed; Minntac's first shipment; National Steel Pellet Plant completed; Deep drill mineral analysis	Mesabi Drill & Tool (Chisholm)					
		68	Custom pellet study	37 camp sites/79 public accesses; Tree planting continues	Nett Lake wild rice project				
Thye	Freeman	69	Scrap metal plant (Keewatin)						
		70							
Thye	Freeman	71	Tree Growth Tax Reports	Clothing manufacturers (International Falls, Onamia, Crosby, Chisholm, Virginia, Eveleth)			Gravity mappings; Iron Range Interpretive Program		
		72	Minntac Step II expansion	Voyageur National Park appraisals	C.W.D.C. loan	Building demo program; Tourist Information Center (Lion Springs)			
Thye	Freeman	73	Fourth Minnesota Forest Survey						
		74	IRIC Construction						
Thye	Freeman	75	Tourism grant (Forest History Center, Planetarium, Old Calumet)						
		76							
Thye	Freeman	77	Hibbing Taconite Company's first shipment; Inland Steel's Minorca plant completed	Iron Range Interpretive Center opened					
		78	Minntac Step III expansion	Forestry Division transferred to DNR	Mineland Reclamation Division Started; Tree Planting Program				
Thye	Freeman	79	Taconite shipments from Mesabi Range reach a high of nearly 60 million tons	Mineland Reclamation moved to Hill Annex Mine; 1979-88 Hill Annex Mine Tour program in operation					
		80	Iron Range Research Center opened						
Thye	Freeman	81	Vermeer tree planter purchased						
		82	Taconite shipments from Mesabi Range drop to less than 24 million tons	1982-88 Growth Chamber at Hill Annex Mine operated					

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Mining	Forestry	Mineland Reclamation	Economic Development	Tourism	Technology	Other	Year	Gov.	Comsr.
St. James project completed; Fish stocking in mine pits began			Wood Pellet Boiler Conversions — Area Schools				83	Perpich	Lamp
Acquisition of Giants Ridge Recreation Area									
Butler plant closed and dismantled	The 1,000,000th tree was planted; Radio Transmitting Network installed		Kasson Manufacturing, Inc.				85		
Reserve Mining Company closed	Hill Annex Mine became a National Historic Site	Minnesota Twist Drill, Inc.	Ironworld Discovery Center (Chisholm)				86		
Sharptail Habitat Development program began; Community Entrance Enhancement Program started			Partridge River, Inc.; marketing assistance program to area businesses	Iron Man statue built in Chisholm				87	
Mineland Reclamation moved to Ironworld; Gilbert Camp-ground completed; Hill Annex Mine became a state park		Tackle Tamer Products, Inc.; local ad campaign — recruitment		Community Development — the 100,000,000th dollar of Community Development grant money				88	
Croft Mine Historical Park completed; Mesabi Range maps completed			MacMillan-Blodel; RangeView				89		
Cyprus Northshore Mining Company reopens (former Reserve plant)		New Growth Chamber at Ironworld completed; First Arbor Day celebration at Ironworld	New Frontier Foods, Inc.; Municipal building renovation program				90		
Storefront renovation grant program		Community Entrance Enhancement Program Completed	The Villas at Giants Ridge opens; Giants Ridge Ski Chalet expansion				91		
9th Annual National American Society For Surface Mining and Reclamation Meeting in Duluth		Ironton Industrial Park completed; Taconite Economic Development Fund established	Northern Lights Tourism Alliance formed		Giants Ridge selected as "Best Cross Country Ski Resort in the Midwest" and "Top Ten North American Cross-Country Ski Resort" by Snow Country magazine		92		
National Steel Pellet Company operation idled	National Arbor Day award given to Mineland Reclamation	CCC Exhibit opens at Ironworld	Beyond School Walls program begins	"The Wild North" was approved as an advertising brand for tourism in northeastern Minnesota			93		
Cyprus Northshore acquired by Cleveland-Cliffs Inc. and renamed Northshore Mining Company; National Steel Pellet Company operations reopened	Handicapped Fishing & Parking Areas at Pennington Access on the Cuyuna Range	Construction begins on Giants Ridge golf course	Iron Range Economic Alliance formed	Septic symposium held at Nelson's Resort, Crane Lake; Task force formed to explore alternative wastewater technologies	Physician Recruitment Program begins	Northwest Airlines Reservation Center in Chisholm; ASV (Grand Rapids)	94		
LaRue Pit Access in Nashwaug completed	IRRRB/Blandin Intercommunity Leadership program launched	"Partnerships that Work" Agency logo developed	Larex International Foodland, Inc.	Heritage Tourism Conference at Ironworld	Housing Program begins; Mesabi Electronics		95		
Eveleth Taconite Company reorganized as ETVAC Mining LLC; Miner's Memorial in Crosby		NLTA received a Travel Marketing Award of Excellence from the MN Office of Tourism for its "Destination Awareness" program		Industrial Park Program	Steger Design, DMR Electronics, Progress Park		96		
White Pine Blister Rust Study	Do I.T! Program launched	Conference	course opens	restaurant at Giants Ridge	Hibbing Fabricators, Silver Bay Marina, Learning Byte International		97		
Inland Steel Mining Company acquired by Ispat International NV and renamed Ispat Inland Mining Company	the Blue Ridge held at Ironworld	NLTA awarded first-ever "Explore Minnesota Travel Counselor Institute"	Giants Ridge golf course named one of the top-ten new courses in the United States by Golf Digest				98		
Capping of abandoned mine shaft in Ely using new polyurethane technology	Minnesota Exploration Conference	Iron Range Ventures, Cincinnati Millacron, Kids Peace, Virginia hospital expansion, Magnum Machining	The Woodlands, single-family housing development, opens at Giants Ridge						
Mineland Reclamation received Partnership Minnesota Cooperative Public Service Award	St. Louis County Fairgrounds move to Ironworld	First-ever TourismFest, a workshop for tourism awareness and customer service training for the Iron Trail and the Wild North	Giants Ridge golf course ranked best public course in Minnesota by Golf Digest		Aitkin Ironworks, Accelerated Payments, Entronix, Equity Program		99		
Minnesota Exploration Conference	Fiber optics extended to Ely	Hibbing Technology Center Initiative launched		Sykes International					
LTV Steel Mining Company declared bankruptcy	Iroquois Pit Safety & Erosion Control Project	Rudy Perpich Memorial Opens in Ironworld Discovery Center	Giants Ridge: Frisbee Disc Golf Course opens, Trails and Terrain Park expanded, The Lodge opens, Construction begins on second golf course, The Quarry				00		
Tek-Train computer-based training begins	Quad Cities Technology Center project underway	FAST Inc, BelCorp	Make-it-Home Database	Delta Dental SATO Travel	Sylvan Prometric Testing Center opens	Itasca Technology Exchange opens			
New Horizons Minerals Development Conference	Technology Training Center at Ironworld Discovery Center opens	Cuyuna Range Technology Center project begins		NLTA Heritage Tourism received first-ever "Cultural/Heritage Tourism Award" from MN Office of Tourism					
LTV Steel Mining Company closed	Mineland Cleanup Program	Mesabi Nugget Development	Heart of Two Harbors Technology Initiative launched	CTAP projects approved	Northeastern Minnesota area-wide network launched		01		

John Swift

2001 Distribution of Taconite Production Tax

The taconite production tax is a severance tax paid on concentrates or pellets produced by the taconite companies. It is paid in place of property taxes on taconite and lands containing taconite.

The taconite production tax is the largest tax paid by the iron mining industry. It is a major source of revenue to the counties, municipalities and school districts where taconite mining exists or where natural ore mining was formerly significant.

The production tax distributed in 2001 is the tax due for the 2000 production year. The taconite production tax rate for concentrates and pellets produced in 2000 was \$2.173 per taxable ton. The taxable tonnage for 2000 is the cumulative average tonnage produced in 1998, 1999 and 2000.

The chart below details the total production tax paid by the six Iron Range taconite operations for the 2000 production year (LTV Steel did not pay this year due to its Chapter 13 bankruptcy filing.) Since these taxes

replace property taxes, Minnesota law mandates their distribution within the Taconite Tax Relief Area (TTRA). Approximately 72 percent of the tax levied is distributed to cities and townships, school districts and counties. The Agency administers approximately 18 percent of the total tax levied, providing grants and loans for economic development and infrastructure projects benefiting communities within the TTRA.

The Agency also administers two production tax rebate programs that help recapitalize Minnesota iron mines. These programs accounted for nearly 10 percent of the total tax levied. In addition, the Agency's fiscal year 2000 budget allocated \$6 million for mining projects and studies for the taconite companies to introduce new or better technology into their plants.

A commissioner, who is appointed by the governor, directs the Agency and is advised by a board comprised of five state senators, five state representatives and three citizens of the TTRA.

