



Ihor A. Kunasz

Ihor Kunasz started his lithium career with a doctoral thesis at the Pennsylvania State University on the Origin of Lithium in the Clayton Valley, where Foote Mineral produced the very first lithium carbonate from brine. He then joined Foote Mineral Company, where he was responsible for the spodumene and brine operations. While at Foote, he evaluated most lithium deposits globally, including the brines of Argentina, Bolivia, and China. He brought to the project development stage the two lowest-cost lithium reserves in the world - Silver Peak, Nevada, U.S.A., and the Salar de Atacama, Chile. At Silver Peak, he was responsible for identifying production targets, and he developed a hydrological model for the basin, which is still valid today. At the Salar de Atacama, in addition to defining the lithium

reserves, his discovery of calcium-rich brines resulted in a new brine process, which replaced costly lime addition.

Ihor Kunasz has been active in the Society for Mining, Metallurgy & Exploration for more than four decades, serving as chair of the Philadelphia Section and chair of the Industrial Minerals Division. In 1998, he served as President of the Society. He is a Distinguished Member of SME and the 1988 recipient of the prestigious AIME Hal Williams Hardinge and Robert M. Dreyer Awards for outstanding achievements in the exploration and development of lithium brine. He has presented papers on lithium at a number of symposia, SME annual meetings and lectured on lithium at Chinese, Argentinian, and Chilean Universities.

With Cypress Mineral Company, he was involved in the successful development of a first-ever Gold mining joint venture (Omolon Mining) in the Russian Far East. He finished his career with Newmont Mining Corporation as president of Newmont Uzbekistan Ltd., the partner with the Uzbek government in the Zarafshan and gold mining joint venture.

Upon his retirement, he joined the TRU Consulting Group that analyzed the viability of the majority of known lithium deposits (pegmatites and brines).

Fully retired, he lives in Tucson with his wife, Zenovia. He is writing a book on his past 50 years of experience with lithium.