

Longwall mining of trona at Solvay Chemicals



Soda Ash

Soda ash can lower the melting point of silica sand and is used in the glass making process. Originally, soda ash was extracted by removing ash from fires that burned sodium rich wood. Soda ash is the third known mineral to

In 2004, over 17 million tons of trona were mined to produce 12 million tons of soda ash. Mining and processing in Wyoming employed over 2,100 people with a payroll of over \$202 million. Trona mining also generated over \$35 million in royalties and tax revenue to the State and Local governments.

Mining and processing of trona has been an economic mainstay in the communities of southwest Wyoming for over 50 years. There are reserves of trona in southwest Wyoming to last for over 1,000 years.

be used by humans, behind salt and lime. The earliest know use of soda ash is over 3,500 years ago by the Egyptians.

Burning of wood to produce soda ash was used until the eighteenth century.

In 1791, LeBlanc invented a process to make soda ash using sulfur, salt & coal gas. Seventy years later, in 1860, Ernest Solvay modified this synthetic process and used brine, ammonia, salt, coal gas and carbon dioxide to achieve a better soda ash.

It was not until the 1950's that soda ash production began in southwest Wyoming. Wyoming soda ash rapidly replaced the "synthetic" soda ash produced by the Solvay method. In the 1970's, the last American synthetic soda ash plant closed down .

Today, 94% of North America's soda ash is produced in southwest Wyoming. This production also accounts for over 25% of world-wide production.

There are several uses of soda ash. Fifty percent of Wyoming's soda ash is used in the production of glass. About 25% of Wyoming's soda ash is used in chemical manufacturing and 12% is used for soaps & detergents. The remaining uses are for the pulp & paper industry, flue gas de-sulfurization and water treatment.



Some products created by soda ash

Trona mining in Wyoming will remain for future generations.

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Information courtesy of Terry Leigh and Ray Harris