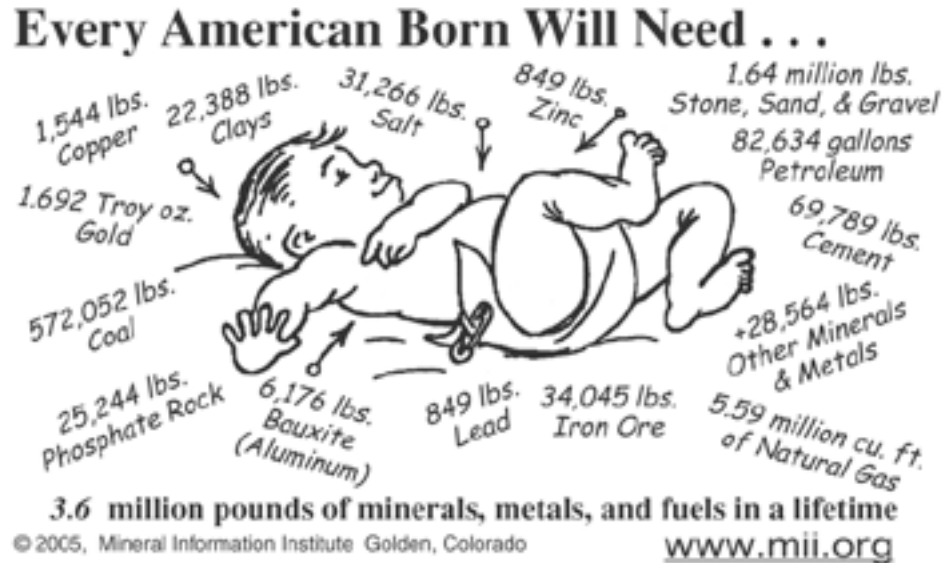




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46,414 Pounds A Year

Baby Gains Nearly Half A Ton Last Year

The average American born last year will have a life span of 77.3 years and will need the mining of nearly 3.6 million pounds of minerals and metals to sustain their standard of living during their lifetime.

According to the Mineral Information Institute, a national educational group, last year nearly seven billion tons of minerals and energy fuels had to be produced to supply the needs of the 293.7 million people living in the United States. That's an average of 46,414 pounds of minerals that were used last year for every man, woman, and child in the country— an increase of 890 pounds in annual per capita consumption in the U.S. from the previous year.

These mineral and energy resources are required to provide the basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter, as well as the natural resources needed to build and use the nation's transportation, manufacturing, and recreational facilities to allow people to pursue their everyday activities.

"The average person doesn't go to a store to buy the minerals and metals they use every day," says Institute President Nelson Fugate, "but nearly everything we do and everything we use, requires mining somewhere to produce the natural resources that makes the things we have and use."

To annually update the *mii Baby*, statistics from the U.S. Geological Survey and the Energy Information Administration provide the amounts of various minerals and energy fuels that are produced and consumed in the United States. Additional research and analysis by the National Mining Association generates information about annual per capita mineral usage.

“Travel is one of the greatest freedoms and luxuries we have, and is a great example of our dependence on minerals,” says Fugate. “The average American travels more than 17,000 miles each year, averaging more than four different trips every day. Ninety percent of those trips and miles are in personal vehicles, and you can’t maintain roads or make cars, or have the fuel to operate those cars, unless you develop and use our natural resources. That means mining to provide the minerals, metals, and gasoline that allows us to travel whenever and wherever we want.”

According to the Institute, in the U.S. there are 3.9 million miles of roads requiring maintenance and repair, that are traveled by slightly more than 200 million motor vehicles (average weight of 3,000 lbs. each), which are driven an average of 12,000 miles a year (requiring an average of 550 gallons of fuel).

A few examples of how those minerals and metals are used.

- The average American house contains slightly more than a quarter of a million pounds of minerals and metals. In the 2000 Census, there were 115.9 million housing “units” counted in the U.S., with about 1.8 million new units constructed each year (slightly more than 1 million are single family houses).
- Americans travel nearly 5 trillion miles every year, an average of 17,000 miles per person— an average of four trips a day, totaling 40 miles. 85% is by passenger cars and light trucks (bicycles account for 6.2 billion of those miles).
- There are 2,336,000 miles of hard surfaced roads and 1,571,000 miles of dirt roads, all requiring maintenance and rebuilding. About 85,000 tons of aggregates are necessary to rebuild one mile of an interstate highway.
- There were 17.4 million new cars and light trucks sold in 2000, bringing the total number of vehicles in operation in the U.S. to 209.5 million. Passenger cars, weighing an average of nearly 3,000 pounds each, are driven nearly 12,000 miles a year and consume an average of 550 gallons of fuel, each. 34% of all our energy is used for transportation.
- And for our electricity, 51% is provided by burning coal, 20% from nuclear powered plants, 20% from burning oil and natural gas, 7% from hydro plants, and 3% from all other sources.
- More than 100 billion aluminum beverage cans are shipped each year; about 60% are recycled. Coca Cola proudly claims to providing more than one billion beverage servings every day.
- 32 million new televisions were bought last year; less than 5% were made in the U.S.
- It is estimated there are 223 million computers in use in the U.S., plus another 315 to 680 million obsolete computers. Each contains more than 37 different minerals and metals.
- A 1999 study states that one pound of coal is being burned (to generate the electricity) for every two megabytes of information moved over the Internet. Ordering a book from Amazon.com or downloading an MP3 music file translates into a half-pound of coal being burned to generate the electricity energizing the transaction.
- Nearly 11 million new refrigerators were purchased last year; the 125 million refrigerators in use in the U.S. consume 1 ½% of all the energy used in the country.

Process for Calculating

To annually update the *mii Baby*, statistics from the U.S.G.S. Annual Mineral Commodity Summaries and the Energy Information Administration provides the U.S. production and consumption information about our minerals and energy fuels. Leslie Coleman with the National Mining Association provides the analysis to generate the per capita mineral usage.

This is where the annual per capita mineral use statistic is created. For 2004, that use was 46,414 pounds of newly mined minerals and metals for every one of the 293.7 million people in the U.S.

To update the MII Baby, these annual numbers are multiplied by the average life span in the U.S., provided by the National Center for Health. The average life expectancy (at birth) in the U.S. is currently 77.3 years (73.8 for males; 79.5 for females). Therefore, 77.3 years x 46,414 = 3.59 million pounds of minerals in a lifetime. For the entire U.S. population, nearly 7 billion tons of minerals were mined and consumed last year to allow people to pursue their everyday activities.

More information is available at www.mii.org.

The Mineral Information Institute is a national nonprofit organization that promotes an understanding and appreciation for the wise use of natural resources by providing classroom lessons, activities, and posters to teachers. The Institute has provided more than 300,000 natural resource education programs to teachers throughout the country.

Every year— 46,414 pounds of new minerals must be provided for every person in the United States to make the things we use, every day



12,095 lbs. **Stone** used to make roads; buildings; bridges; landscaping; numerous chemical and construction uses



80 lbs. **Aluminum (Bauxite)** used to make buildings; beverage containers; autos; airplanes



9,134 lbs. **Sand & Gravel** used to make concrete; asphalt; roads; blocks & bricks



20 lbs. **Copper** used in buildings; electrical & electronic parts; plumbing; transportation



904 lbs. **Cement** used to make roads; sidewalks; bridges; buildings; schools; houses



11 lbs. **Lead** 75% used for transportation— batteries; electrical; communications; TV screens



441 lbs. **Iron Ore** used to make steel— buildings; cars, trucks, planes, & trains; other construction; containers



11 lbs. **Zinc** used to make metals rust resistant; various metals & alloys; paint; rubber; skin creams; health care; and nutrition



405 lbs. **Salt** used in various chemicals; highway deicing; food & agriculture



6 lbs. **Manganese** used to make almost all steels for: construction; machinery; transportation



327 lbs. **Phosphate rock** used to make fertilizers to grow food; animal feed supplements



344 lbs. **Other Nonmetals** numerous uses glass; chemicals; soaps; paper; computers; cellular phones; etc.



290 lbs. **Clays** used to make floor & wall tile; dinnerware; kitty litter; bricks & cement; paper



26 lbs. **Other Metals** numerous uses same as nonmetals, but also electronics; TV & video equipment; recreation equipment; etc.

Plus These Energy Fuels

- 1,070 gallons of **Petroleum**
- 7,423 lbs. of **Coal**
- 72,353 cu. ft. of **Natural Gas**
- 1/4 lb. of **Uranium**

To generate the energy each person uses in one year—
equivalent to 300 people working around the clock for each of us.

