

## Businesses asked to help fill dangerous old mine shafts

by *Deanna Dent* - Oct. 22, 2008 12:00 AM

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GOLD CANYON - With Arizona's budget under strain, State Mine Inspector Joe Hart is encouraging more companies to volunteer to fill in some of the thousands of dangerous mine-shaft openings around Arizona.

"We're looking at a \$1.8 billion shortfall, and the only way we can get the kind of funding to fill these kinds of holes is through the private sector," Hart said.

Officials have documented about 100,000 abandoned mine shafts around Arizona, Hart said.

About 9,000 of those shafts are

considered dangerous because of their depth and their proximity to communities and recreation areas.

Two people have been killed falling into open mine shafts in the past 13 months: a 13-year-old girl riding an all-terrain vehicle near Kingman and a 19-year-old man who had stepped away from a campfire near Cave Creek.

Hart and 13 CalPortland managers were out before sunrise pouring concrete into an abandoned mercury mine.

CalPortland donated more than \$4,000 in materials, while the Department of Mines and Mineral Resources took care of permits required to fill the shaft.

After pouring concrete in the shafts, crews covered them with rocks and earth.

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"When we leave, we don't want it to look like anything was ever here," Anderson said.

Steve Trussell, executive director for the Arizona Rock Products Association, said it's important for more companies to follow CalPortland's lead.

"This is a legacy that gives the industry a black eye," Trussell said.

Hart said he is talking to a couple of other companies about volunteering manpower and materials to close mine shafts.

He declined to identify them.

"CalPortland really stepped up to the plate; others are giving money," Hart said. "We just can't do it without that help."

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