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Gap between Canadian and U.S. Mine Salaries Continues to Grow

Canadian mine salaries continue to outpace U.S. mine salaries in most job categories when compared in common currency units, according to recent surveys by the CostMine division of InfoMine (formerly Western Mine Engineering). For the first time this year, even professionals at U.S. coal mine salaries were paid less than their Canadian counterparts.

This conclusion is drawn from the results of surveys of 250 Canadian and U.S. mines conducted in 2006 and 2007. Average benchmark salaries derived from the surveys are listed in the table below. The Canadian wages are listed both in Canadian dollars and in comparable U.S. dollars at the June 1, 2007 exchange rate of 1 U.S. dollar equals 1.0682 Canadian dollars. Canadian coal mines are grouped with other Canadian mines because of the small size of the Canadian coal industry. No adjustments were made for the timing of data collection which extended over a period of 18 months.

Not only do the Canadian personnel take home higher salaries, but they are more likely than their U.S. counterparts to receive bonus checks, and those checks tend to be larger as well. Nearly 75% of the Canadian mines reported paying bonuses to their salaried personnel, in amounts typically ranging from 5% to 25% of base salaries, with some as high as 50%. The U.S. metal and industrial mineral compensation survey reported 67% of mines paying bonuses, with amounts typically ranging from 5% to 25%. Considerably fewer U.S. coal mines, only 57%, reported the use of bonus plans, and the amounts tended to be less, typically 2 to 20% of base salary.

Details about the mine compensation surveys upon which this data is based are available at www.costmine.com.

Table. Benchmark Average Annual Base Salaries at Canadian and U.S. Mines 2006-2007

	Coal U.S. (US\$) 47 mines	Metal & Industrial Mineral U.S. (US\$) 170 mines	Canada (C\$) 42 mines	Canada (US\$) 42 mines
General Manager	151,600	126,700	168,900	180,419
Mine Manager	116,800	95,500	133,700	142,818
Mine Superintendent	105,900	78,600	104,400	111,520
Mill/Prep Plant Superintendent	96,100	77,800	102,000	108,956
Mine Foreman	77,400	59,700	81,300	86,845
Mill/Prep Plant Foreman	72,100	58,900	80,800	86,311
Chief Engineer	98,300	85,900	98,100	104,790
Mine Engineer	71,000	63,800	75,700	80,863
Chief Geologist	81,800	78,400	89,100	95,177
Mine Geologist	68,000	58,200	74,200	79,260
Exchange Rate: US\$ = C\$1.0682 June 1, 2007				