



Philippine Resources

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Red Mountain On The Fast Track

**Stuck In A
Zero Sum
Game**

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Drawing Lessons from the Past

Patricia A. O. Bunye

The commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the Philippine Mine Safety and Environment Association (PMSEA) this November is an opportune time to pause and reflect on why all “all roads lead to Baguio” every November, with practically everyone from the mining industry trooping to the City of Pines for PMSEA’s Annual National Mine Safety and Environment Conference (ANMSEC).

A close look at the seal of Baguio City shows that it bears four gold dots that cut diagonally across a field of green. These four gold dots represent the four mining communities that developed around Ba-

guio at the start of the 20th century: Balatoc, Acupan, Antamok and Itogon Suyoc.

As described by Salvador P. Lopez in his book *Isles of Gold: The History of Mining in the Philippines*, “(T)he story of the mining industry’s growth is most sensationally told as the story of how Baguio transformed from a vast wilderness with patches of human settlements into a bustling metropolis.”

The remarkable gold find in Balatoc in 1929, the second mining boom in the late 1930s and the resulting frenzy over mining stocks all contributed to the rapid development of Baguio, not just as a mining district, but also as a community.

“The industry brought the men from the



lowlands – technical people, businessmen, labourers, families, others – to the mines. The companies partially subsidized the construction of roads and bridges leading to the mines and supported the budding aviation and shipping industry,” wrote Lopez.

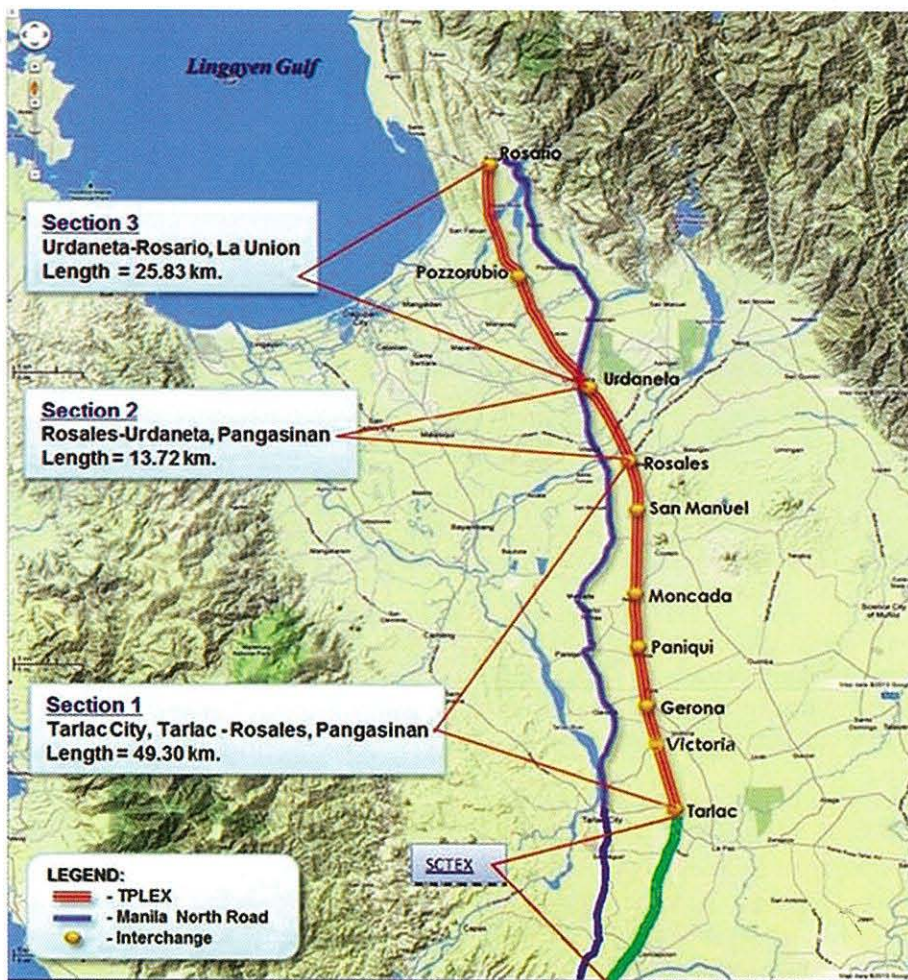
Growing importance

With the growing importance of Baguio and need for mining prospectors and businessmen, among others, to reach it, Benguet Road was constructed. Prior to its construction, it took a 24-hour boat ride from Manila to San Fernando plus a 3 hour horseback ride to reach the area. Benguet Road was later renamed Kennon Road after Col. Lyman W.V. Kennon, a US military officer recognized for his work with the Corps of Engineers who built it.

Kennon’s efforts in relation to Benguet Road were unprecedented and involved transporting supplies slowly along the dangerous terrain. Today, we take land travel to Baguio for granted.

By the time this article sees print, the much awaited Tarlac-Pangasinan-La Union Expressway (TPLEX), which is expected to complement the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway (SCTEX) and cut travel time to Baguio further by another 40 minutes, should have at least been partially opened.

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After the completion of Benguet Road, Daniel Burnham, the American architect and urban planner best known for his work in the cities of Chicago and Washington, DC, presided over the development of Baguio into a well-planned model city.

Other roads were later built as alternatives to Benguet Road, including Naguilian Road which was constructed following a flood that damaged Benguet Road, as well as other roads required to access other areas such as Mankayan Mines.

From 1903 to 1929, Baguio saw the establishment of more parks and recreational facilities, a race course, public market, churches and school, public utilities such as a telephone system, water supply system, garbage system, slaughter house, ice plant, sewerage system and hydroelectric plant, among many others.

Few places in the Philippines matched this pace of growth during those years.

The Baguio mining district's dominance in terms of gold production at that time



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was reflected in the distribution of the 1938 total gold production of the country. Baguio accounted for 63%; Paracale-Mambulao, 16%; Masbate, 12%, Surigao, 5% and all others, 4%.

In recent years, however, in the face of other drivers of development such as BPOs and tourism, even local residents of Baguio seem to have forgotten the key role played by mining in the rapid development of the city and its environs.

It must be remembered, however, the emergence of Baguio as a tourist destination and "summer capital of the Philippines" would not have been possible if it had not become easily accessible by land due to the efforts of the mining companies to build roads.

Last year, also on the occasion of ANM-SEC, Diwata held a dialogue on "Mining as a Means for Development" in partnership with PMSEA, the South Africa Embassy and Gold Fields Philippines Corporation to discuss a number of relevant issues about mining, including: (a) whether agriculture and tourism co-exist side-by-side with mining; (b) how LGUs benefit from Mining; (c) how LGUs can optimize the contribution of mining companies; and (d) how the mining industry can spur development of host communities.

The highlight of the dialogue was the presentation of South Africa Deputy Minister of Mineral Resources, Hon. Godfrey Oliphant, who spoke on the South African experience in mining. Given Baguio's rich mining history, it was therefore a surprise that even regional representatives of government agencies involved in the mining industry did not appear to be fully convinced of its contributions to economic growth.

It is against this backdrop that Diwata-Women in Resource Development, Inc. ("Diwata") is holding its second forum in Baguio entitled "Conversations with the Daughters of Mining's Dirty Dozen" on November 20. "Mining's Dirty

Dozen" refers to the first twelve graduates of Mining Engineering of the Mapua Institute of Technology on whom a book of the same title was written in 2007 by Mercedes Balota-Suleik and Zorayda Amelia Capistrano-Alonzo, daughters of Victor E. Balota, and Pablo M. Capistrano, respectively. The other ten Mining Engineering pioneers were: Arturo P. Alcaraz, Gregorio M. Campomanes, Pablo M. Capistrano, David P. Cruz, Lazaro A. Cruz, Honesto A. Gapud, Jose G. Licuanan, Ignacio S. Antonio, Bienvenido Garcia, Lauro A. Ferrera and Mauro L. Gonzales.

The book tells the story of the lives of these daring pioneers "who dug and milled the precious ores from the bowels of our land, who enabled the creation of so much wealth for our country and its people".

It is noteworthy that, when the "Dirty Dozen" took the examinations for mining engineers, there were more foreign than Filipino candidates. It is not surprising, however, that the Filipinos acquitted themselves quite well, with Licuanan, Balota and Alcaraz placing third, fourth and fifth, respectively.

As Diwata sees itself as a facilitator and enabler of frank, open, and always constructive discussions of issues, we hope that the "Conversations with the Daughters of Mining's Dirty Dozen" will result in a better understanding of both the challenges faced by the mining industry and how these were overcome from the perspective of the families of these pioneers.

Invited to join the conversations with the authors of the book, Alonzo and Suleik, are Baguio's government officials, businessmen, opinion makers, academicians, students and civic leaders. ■

"Conversations with the Daughters of Mining's Dirty Dozen" will be held on 20 November 2013, 2-5 pm, at the Hill Station, Casa Vallejo, Baguio City.