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## Truth in Advertising

By Carolyn Shafer

"We Dig Jobs" is a new bumper sticker seen around town. Yet recently released reports state that while employment has improved in Santa Cruz County, there remains a high unemployment rate—so let's talk about jobs

Around 1960 the last mines closed. Jobs evaporated overnight. While ranching continued in eastern Santa Cruz County, the economy here was rebuilt around tour-

ism. The region became known as a worldwide destination for birders and began to draw people from all over Arizona and the United States. because of its significant biological diversity. Building on the strong economic base of ranching and tourism, other industries such as local food production, wineries (*USA Today* lists this region as one of the top 10 wine trails in the country), ecotourism and heritage tourism are contributing to

the economic growth and employment opportunities.

In December 2011, the Mountain Empire Business Survey identified 217 small local businesses that employ about 800 people. Economist Dr. Tom Powers analyzed the survey and concluded that 51% of business sales and about half of the jobs are attributable to landscape and cultural amenities (hiking, biking, hunting, birding, equestrian activities, ranches, relaxation getaways, health and wellness, historic and cultural sites, artisans and artists, dining, shopping). Mining will destroy the landscapes and the cultural amenities, and, as a result, about half the business revenue and half of the 800 existing jobs will be gone.

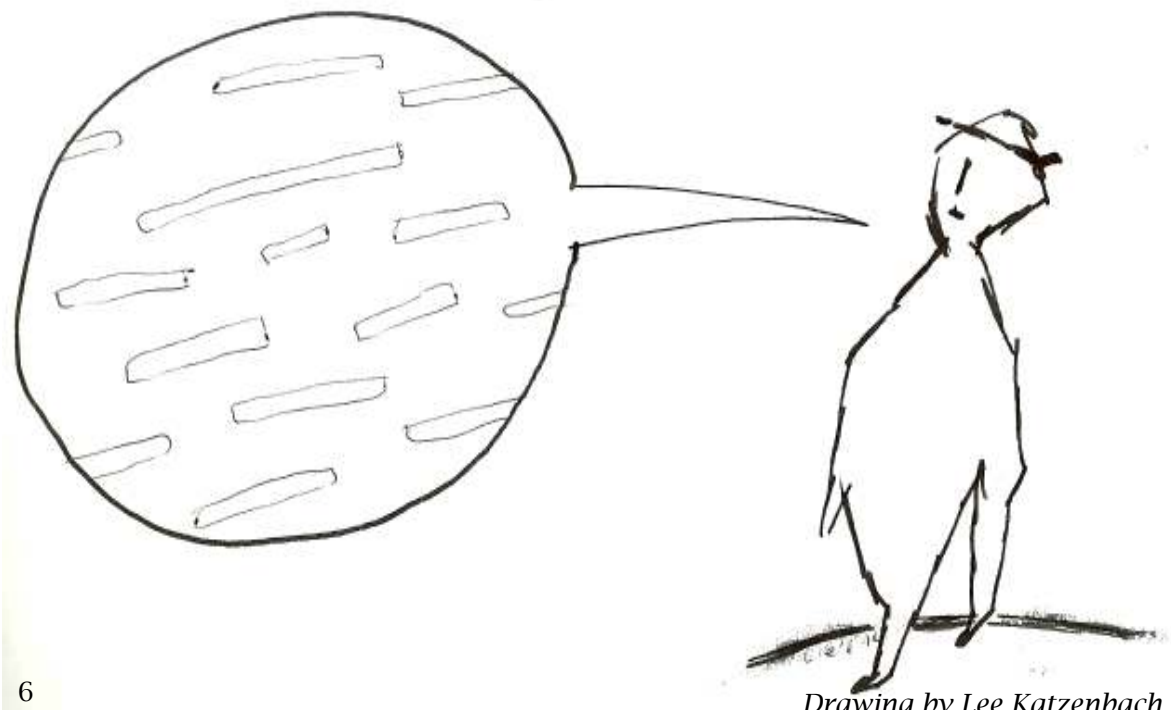
Corporate representatives of Wildcat Silver were recently quoted in the media as saying that the Hermosa mining project will bring 250 jobs. However, it appears likely that this community could lose 400 existing jobs because of mining. It is doubtful that many of the 200+ local businesses could survive a 50% loss of revenue that might result from destruction of landscapes by mining.

Wildcat Silver projects that the mine would operate for 16 years, assuming best case scenario. After that, once again mining jobs would be gone.

One thing we can do is proactively engage our local unemployed citizens in vocational and educational assessments and other employment services provided by Santa Cruz County Career One Stop. Let's create an economic model that emphasizes job stability, environmental sustainability, equitable economic justice, and the well-being of the individual and the family as opposed to the rate of financial return for only a select few.

*AUTHOR'S FOOTNOTE:*

*I asked the Wildcat Silver representative for specific information regarding the classification of those jobs, including salary ranges and qualifications (education, experience, skills). I have been told that information will be provided in a document that is being reviewed for release to the company's investors. Wildcat Silver's website states that the production jobs will be 12-hour shifts on a rotating night /day shift schedule.*



Drawing by Lee Katzenbach


Jeffrey G Latham, architect, CSI  
 PO Box 2257  
 Nogales, Arizona  
 85628

520 287 5547

[jglatham@mchsi.com](mailto:jglatham@mchsi.com)

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NANCY McCOY 520 394-2732  
 357 Duquesne Ave. P.O. Box 162 Patagonia, AZ. 85624  
[theduquesnehouse.com](http://theduquesnehouse.com)