An Overview of Mining and Mineral Specimens from the Conco Mine: North Aurora, Kane County, Illinois

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As urban sprawl continues around the City of Chicago, the demand for aggregate has steadily risen. Limited land availability and surface permitting for quarrying operations have led to the increase of underground limestone and dolomite mines and the contemplation of current quarry operations to go underground. Since 1991, the Conco Mine in North Aurora has been mining limestone and dolomite underground.

Previously owned by Conco-Western and now owned by Lafarge North America, Conco continues to prove that underground aggregate mining around a large metropolis is economical and successful.

One exciting consequence of underground mining has been the discovery of massive solution cavities lined with large specimen quality minerals such as calcite, pyrite, and marcasite. The scientific importance of these minerals has been recognized, and the mining company has allowed the author to extract specimens for scientific research. Research has been ongoing to interpret the digenetic fluids responsible for carbonate digenesis of the limestone host rock and precipitation of world class mineral specimens.

[Image of a mineral specimen]

Photograph by Jeff Scovil