

Tour the Ajax Mine Site Above Victor

The Ajax Mine sits high above Victor on historic Battle Mountain. The Battle Mountain Trail across the lower part of Victor's backdrop beneath the Ajax has been a popular hike since 2000 when it was installed.

Last year the trail was been extended to a new overlook at the Ajax Mine. Newmont Mining Corporation invested in the construction required to provide visitors with a safe access to the mine site and overlook above Victor. The overlook has now been closed to ensure safety at the mine site during the expansion of the mining operation. This temporary closure will be for about one year and means that no access will be allowed other than during a special tour Saturday, May 19.

The tour will include an historical overview of the mine history by Victorite Gary Horton, who worked at the Ajax during its final years in production. This tour is subject to safety considerations and may include alternate stops at the Independence and Portland mines.

The tour is \$15 per person and is limited to the first 60 tickets sold. Tickets may be purchased at VictorColorado.com by credit card or by cash the door the day of the event. The tour will start at the Victor Lowell Thomas Museum at 12:30 p.m. when shuttles will take tour-goers to the Ajax Mine site and overlook. After the history presentation, a shuttle will take everyone back to the museum in Victor.

Cosponsors of this event are The Southern Teller County Focus Group (STCFG) which will receive all proceeds from the event for historic preservation projects, Newmont Mining Corporation, and Cripple Creek Parks and Recreation.

The Ajax Gold Mining Company shipped high grade gold ore starting in 1895. About 1903, Charles Tutt, Spencer Penrose, Charles MacNeill, Clarence Hamlin, and Oliver Shoup owned the mine. The mine operated for years but eventually water levels at depths of 2,000 feet and lower made the endeavor unprofitable. With the construction of the Carlton Tunnel, a six-mile drainage project completed in 1941, the mine was more easily worked below 3,000 feet underground.

The Ajax and its satellite properties were the seventh largest producing gold mine in the United States in 1947 and the largest producer in Colorado in 1954. Mining continued through the years and the steel headframe now in place was erected in 1959. In 1972 the facility underwent a major rehabilitation. Operations continued into the mid-1980s.

Be sure to dress appropriately for spring mountain weather (which can include wind, cold temperatures, snow, and rain), wear good hiking shoes or boots, and bring water and sunscreen. The tour is at an elevation of 10,000 feet above sea level. There are no restroom facilities at the mine site.

Victor Lowell Thomas Museum's Sunnyside Cemetery tour will begin at 10 a.m. the morning of May 19, and end around noon so it is possible to attend both tours. See VictorColorado.com for more information.

For more information, email stcfg@victorcolorado.com.