

THE SPACE RESOURCES ROUNDTABLE: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE ACTIVITIES OF AN ORGANIZATION FOCUSED ON SPACE RESOURCES UTILIZATION. A. Abbud-Madrid¹, L. S. Gertsch², and D. Boucher³, ¹Colorado School of Mines, 1310 Maple St., Golden, CO 80401, aabbudma@mines.edu; ²Missouri University of Science and Technology, 203 Rock Mechanics, Rolla, MO 65409, gertschl@mst.edu, ³Deltion Innovations, Ltd., 26 Meehan St, Capreol, Ontario, P0M 1H0, Canada, dboucher@deltion.ca.

For the past sixteen years, the Space Resources Roundtable (SRR) has brought together interested individuals from the space exploration community, the financial sector, and mining and minerals industries to discuss issues related to the In-Situ Resource Utilization (ISRU) of lunar, asteroidal, and martian resources.

The SRR serves as a communications mechanism between the wide range of people who are and should be involved in a multiplicity of aspects dealing with space resource development. These include fields such as: exploration, mineral extraction, refining, manufacturing, infrastructure development, space transportation, and a host of other technical areas that play an important role in the space resources field. In addition, participation has also included individuals and companies who are developing markets that may be served by space resources products, such as space industrialization, tourism, space power, and terrestrial uses, as well as from the financial, legal, and entrepreneurial aspects of resource development. In particular, the last four years have seen an increased participation from the private space commercial sector, with all the newly formed companies interested on exploiting the resources from the Moon and asteroids.

The SRR is engaged in the following program activities:

1. Space Resources Roundtable meetings. These are held every year and cover all areas of interest in the space resources field. For the 2008 meeting, the SRR joined forces with the Lunar Exploration Analysis Group (LEAG) and the International Lunar Exploration Working Group (ILEWG) in a meeting held in Houston, TX, where the scientific, engineering, and commercial aspects of lunar resources utilization were explored. Since 2010, the SRR has partnered with the Planetary and Terrestrial Mining Sciences Symposium (PTMSS) to increase the participation from experts of the mining sector.

2. Maintenance of the Space Resources Roundtable web site. This site (www.isruinfo.com) provides informative and educational materials on space resources for both professional and lay communities. It also keeps track of all recent developments and meetings of interest to the ISRU community.

3. Electronic communications network. The SRR provides a mechanism for professionals to communicate with each other electronically. Members of the Space Resources Roundtable have access to information about the interests and experience of other members and are provided with easy electronic access to individuals or to the entire membership. This is also the preferred medium used to quickly and efficiently inform the ISRU community of any important news and upcoming meetings of interest.

In the past, the SRR has released several white papers aimed to inform and educate scientists, engineers, policy makers, and government officials on the topic of space resources. The intention of these white papers has been to communicate how economic reasons dictate that the promise of use of resources in space transcends current programs for the exploration of space. That not only will the availability of resources – materials and energy – reduce the difficulty and cost of exploration programs, by “living off the land,” but will allow commerce to take root outside of Earth. Going forward, as interest increases on incorporating space resources on the exploration of the Moon, asteroids, and Mars, the SRR intends to play a key role of bringing together all the important players and disseminating critical information to make the utilization of space resources a reality.