Mining returns to Virginia City area

By Paul Nelson, KTVN-TV

For several years, Comstock Mining Incorporated has been trying to begin operations at an open-pit mine, in Storey County. This week, the mine began hauling and crushing ore, but not everyone is on board. Corrado De Gasperis is the mine's president and CEO. He says about 100 employees are in the process of digging up 2.5 million ounces of gold and 24-million ounces of silver from the mine.

"At today's prices, it's almost $5-billion worth of value and we honestly feel that we've just started to define the resource," De Gasperis said. "We've only drilled on less than 10% of our property."

The 10 square mile parcel is partly between the towns of Gold Hill and Silver City. Some residents fear the mine will force people out, and bring in transient workers.

"You're basically blowing up the community and starting all over again," Comstock Residents Association Member Joe McCarthy said.

The mine has gotten dozens of permits and Storey County Commissioners have approved the operation, but the Comstock Residents Association says their voices have fallen on deaf ears.

"They want to know what the impact of this project is going to be on wildlife habitat, on our recreational areas, on our ground water," McCarthy said.

"We committed to voluntary soil testing of any disturbances before we do it, and we've proven, now, the safeness of all

the activities," De Gasperis said.

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