



Thomas D. Shaffner Exhibit Hall Themes and Galleries

The Thomas D. Shaffner exhibit hall is organized around several broader education themes. Each of these themes is supported by several galleries that have a distinct focus. Each gallery consists of individual exhibits.

Theme – Minerals as Natural Masterpieces

In this theme, learn that minerals are natural artistic masterpieces. Minerals occur in a wide variety of shapes and colors, are popular for photographers and painters, and are often used as patterns for paper, etc. Throughout the entire exhibit hall you can enjoy the visual treasures – minerals.

Supporting Galleries:

Beauty of Minerals, Mineral Treasures, Gemstones, as well as the entire exhibit hall

Theme – Minerals of the Great Lakes Region

In this theme, learn about the minerals that occur in the Great Lakes Region in the largest public exhibit of Great Lakes minerals. The Great Lakes region has yielded a wide variety of fine mineral specimens on display here from native copper in the Keweenaw Peninsula, Michigan to iron minerals in the Lake Superior region to native sulfur and celestine in lower Michigan.

Supporting Galleries:

Michigan Copper, Lake Superior Iron, and Michigan Basin and Beyond as well as the entire exhibit hall

Theme – Minerals of the World

In this theme, learn about the geographic variety of the mineral kingdom. Out of the over 4500 known minerals, the museum collection includes about 2000 different mineral species from around the world and beyond.

Supporting Galleries:

Worldwide Systematic, and Meteorites and Fossils as well as the entire exhibit hall

Theme – Processes that form Minerals

In this theme, learn about natural processes that form minerals. Minerals precipitate from cool and hot waters as well directly from high temperature silicate magmas. Once formed minerals can be changed to other minerals (altered) by warm to hot metamorphic processes and by surface weathering.

Supporting Galleries:

Cool Water, Hot Water, Magmatic, Alteration

Theme – Minerals and Society

In this theme, learn about minerals and their importance to modern society.

Minerals are natural crystalline chemical compounds (Introduction gallery) that can be distinguished by their properties (Mineral Properties gallery including fluorescence (Fluorescent gallery). Minerals are a part of our everyday lives as they are used in many common everyday items. Environmentally responsible extraction of minerals from the Earth involves multiple steps.

Supporting Galleries:

Introduction, Mineral Properties, Fluorescent, Minerals and You, Mining Minerals