

## *“Calcite; from Museum Ornamental to Building Fundamental”*

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Calcite with its many crystalline forms is a commonly collected mineral throughout much of Iowa. However, in its microcrystalline rock form (limestone), calcite is much less ornamental but is of critical importance as a building and construction material. Limestone is composed of small particles of calcite naturally cemented together by other calcite crystals. Many of the rock exposures we see along Iowa's roadsides are limestone. The rock that is composed of these tiny, beautiful calcite crystals is mined, crushed, and incorporated into many aspects of our society. Each year the limestone industry in Iowa quarries in excess of 30 million tons of limestone for roads, construction project, building blocks, and other uses. Bountiful in Iowa, limestone is the principal component of Portland cement, and the most commonly-used aggregate in the concrete that builds our society. Find out more about how the mining and construction industries produce and utilize this valuable resource and how important calcite is for Iowa's future.

