Volunteer of the Year Award

Joseph "Joe" Kurtak

The Volunteer of the Year Award honors an individual whose generous contributions of time, talent, and energy strengthen AMA, support its activities, and encourage others to become involved in Alaska's mining community.

The Alaska Miners Association is proud to recognize Joseph "Joe" Kurtak with the 2026 Volunteer of the Year Award for his longstanding service to AMA and his dedication to the next generation of Alaska geologists.

Joe devoted a decade to chairing AMA's Geoscience Technical Session and has continued supporting the convention's technical program since passing that responsibility to new leadership. His generosity with his time and expertise has helped sustain the exchange of knowledge that makes AMA valuable to its members.

That same commitment extends to students. As a volunteer adviser to the University of Alaska Anchorage Geology Club, Joe has organized recurring field trips to Lucky Shot, bringing as many as 20 students at a time to experience an Alaska mining project firsthand. These visits connect classroom learning with field practice and introduce students to working professionals and potential careers. His service on UAA's Geological Sciences Community Advisory Board further strengthens the connection between education and industry.

A retired Bureau of Land Management geologist, Joe brings decades of field experience and a love of Alaska geology to his volunteer work.

Joe also encourages students to attend AMA technical sessions, explore the trade show, and make professional connections at Young Professionals Night. Through mentorship, field experiences, and years of association service, he helps others find their place in Alaska mining. Congratulations, Joe, and thank you for the knowledge, encouragement, and time you so generously share.

