

ROCKS & MINERALS

For Everyone Interested in Minerals, Rocks & Fossils

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U-HAUL ROCKS

I was driving down I-84 last fall when I passed a truck with an amazing picture on the side. It was a U-Haul rental truck, splashed with a large color image of fluorescent minerals from Franklin, New Jersey! I could hardly believe my eyes, so at the first opportunity I looked for a Web site that might explain this phenomenon. And there it was—the home page for U-Haul's new generation of "Super Graphics" in its "Venture Across America Series." Heading straight to the New Jersey page, I found informative links describing mineral fluorescence and the geology, minerals, and history of the Franklin–Sterling Hill mines. There is also information on



the local mineral and mining museums.

Many of U-Haul's new truck designs have natural history themes, ranging from the geology and ecology of the Hawaiian Islands to rare orchids in Florida swamplands. Truck graphics with special appeal to the geologist or mineral collector include Crater of Diamonds State Park in Arkansas and a giant buried meteor impact structure in Manson, Iowa. Several others focus on unusual fossils and their geologic settings, one of the best being the story of the "Tully Monster" in the Illinois coal mines. I watched for these trucks when they were parked at the U-Haul depot here in Augusta, Maine, and took the enclosed photos.

U-Haul draws the public's attention to unusual or mysterious features in each state, and the Web links provide background information that is educational, entertaining, and carefully researched. Students and teachers will learn much from this Web site and enjoy watching for the trucks on the highway. For more information, visit www.uhaul.com/supergraphics/index.html.

Woody Thompson
Maine Geological Survey
Augusta, Maine



Some examples of U-Haul truck graphics. Photos by Woody Thompson.

ARTICHOKE QUARTZ

As a geologist and mineral wholesaler, I read with interest John White's article on artichoke quartz in the March/April issue. It is a great article. I enjoyed his careful examination and wonderful discussion.

The location is indeed Shangbao, Leiyang County, Hunan Province. I went there in 1990. These types of specimens were mined about four or five years ago, and I have several boxes of specimens from the locality. They may include some artichoke quartz with pyrite, and possibly fluorite. I'll take a close look at them this summer. Hopefully, I can find more evidence to back Mr. White's conclusions.

Paul Liu
Greatwall Consulting & Trading
Northglenn, Colorado

Thank you very much for the article about artichoke quartz in the recent issue. I was fortunate enough to acquire a nice specimen of this interesting material when I was in China in the latter part of 2001. I got it from a geologist who is not actually a dealer, although he supplements his income by selling unusual specimens that he encounters in the course of his work. He said that it came from Shangbao, so I believe that is a valid location for the material. When getting minerals from a country such as China, where the language is so different from ours, I have found it best to request that the name of the location not be translated into English. I have had much better luck by letting them write the location as they would write it for native reading and then doing my own conversion using world atlases and a local interpreter.

John White's article caused me to reexamine my specimen, and I did so from a different perspective. The fluorite under the pyrite, of course, was a curiosity that has plagued me since I first examined the piece. I think Mr. White came up with a good explanation for much of the growth mechanism of the crystals. My specimen is fairly large (15 x 12 x 8 cm) and has a number of