



MINER DETAILS



Volume 5 Issue 4 WV Office of Miners' Health, Safety & Training July 2000

BRIDGING THE COMMUNICATION GAP

From the Director's Office

I would like to take this opportunity to update everyone on what's going on at MHS&T. First, I wish to welcome two new employees to the agency, safety instructor Lonnie Gore and underground inspector Kip Bell. Both of these employees are working in the Danville office. Each of these individuals will be an asset to the agency. Please take the time to say hello and welcome them to the agency.

We have recently released a video on "back safety" that we feel will have a big impact on preventing back injuries. As everyone is aware, back injuries are the leading cause of non-fatal accidents in the coal industry. We intend, as we have in the past, to make the video available to anyone who requests a copy.

Several questions have arisen concerning whether we are going to have our annual staff meeting at the MSHA Academy. We are in the process of putting together an agenda we feel will be informative for everyone, with something of interest for each employee. The meeting is scheduled for September 7 and 8, 2000.

I would also like to thank everyone for the hard work and good job they are doing. Although one fatality in the industry is too many, tremendous improvements have been made since the early 1990's. In 1991, 92, and 93, West Virginia had 50 fatal accidents. In 1994, 95, and 96, we had 37 fatalities. In 1997, 98, and 99 we had 21 fatalities. I do not think these improvements are coincidental.

hard-working, dedicated employees who care. Thanks again.

On a sad note, the year 2000 has been one in which we have lost some employees and former employees. They were friends of each one of us at MHS&T. In April, Ralph Wiley, former Safety Instructor in the Welch office passed away. In May, Al Kirchartz, Electrical Inspector in the Fairmont office passed away. In June, Ken Faerber, former DOE Commissioner died. Also in June, Frank Legg, Inspector-at-Large in Oak Hill suddenly passed away. We need to remember each of these people and their families in our prayers. Each contributed one hundred percent and they will be hard to replace.

Ron Harris, Director

Inside this Newsletter:

- *From the Director's Office*
- *Agency Accomplishments*
- *For Your Information*
- *Did You Know?*
- *Up Close and Personal*
- *What's Cookin'?*

Agency Accomplishments

Wellness Program

This spring MHS&T initiated a wellness plan. Marti Sigmon is coordinating the program for the agency. The first effort has been a walking program called One Hundred Miles in One Hundred Days. As the title indicates our goal is to walk a minimum of one mile each day for 100 days. Twenty-three individuals signed up

to participate. The 100 days end later this month, at which time a potluck luncheon will be held. A door prize (from an enrollment fee of two dollars) will be awarded to one of the walkers who have completed at least 100 miles. Marti says to watch for future programs and updates.

For Your Information

EMT Training

Ten employees in our agency are studying to become certified EMT instructors. They completed the 110-hour EMT-B training at the MSHA Academy on June 29th. Test score results should be available in 6 to 8 weeks. Although a minimum score of 70% is needed to pass, a score of 85% is required to continue. The next step is to complete the 40-hour Adult Education Methods Class. This class will include monitoring and evaluation by RESA. Successful participants will then be certified EMT instructors, and will begin offering initial and re-certification EMT-M classes throughout the state.

Did You Know?

Payroll News

With your July 15th payday, you will notice several changes. The third \$756 pay increase takes affect July 1. Some employees will see a change in their insurance premiums for those who changed health coverage. Most employees should see an increase in increment pay of this year due to a change in the federal tax-withholding rate.

Highwalls and Auger Holes.

Opening deep mines on strip benches with auger holes is

nothing new. The mining code requires 50' of natural strata between drift openings. In the 70's, miners crawled to the back of the auger holes and timbered their way to the surface. In the 80's, we stopped entering the auger holes and began filling the entrance of the holes with timbers 10' in length. This prevented the miners from having to enter these holes, but did not always provide the support necessary to have a stable highwall in all cases. Grouting the entire length of the auger holes now appears to be the best method. The strength of the grout can be changed at the time of mixing to suit the needs of the highwall. There is no reliable way to determine the strength of the webbing between the auger holes. The quality of the mine roof normally weakens as the coal seam outcrops with mud seams and cracks. Although the auger operator didn't intend to cut the auger holes together, it sometimes happened. Some of these conditions can be observed from the surface of the face-up, but most often the holes cut together deep under the mountain and cannot be seen from the surface. Grout is thin enough to flow into all the voids creating a stronger foundation for the highwall to rest upon. Today, no one is exposed to the danger of entering the auger holes.

Up Close and Personal

Frank A. "Bill" Legg of the Oak Hill office died Wednesday morning June 14, 2000 in the Memorial Division of CAMC after a short illness. He had more than 30 years with our organization and was Inspector-at-Large of the Oak Hill office. Frank was respected by all that knew him and his passing was a shock. He had dedicated his life and work to the health and safety of our miners and citizens; and was very instrumental in the co-ordination of all mine rescue contests for as long as any of us can remember. He was also a former Captain of the Oak Hill Volunteer Fire Department. Frank had served in the Army during the

Korean War and was laid to rest in Highlawn Memorial Park, Oak Hill. The Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3110 of Oak Hill performed a military funeral tribute. Our prayers go out to Frank's wife Betty and his son Michael. We will surely miss him.

Al Kirchartz, electrical inspector of the Fairmont Office died in May. He was highly thought of by all that knew him. He was a man knowledgeable in all aspects of his work, who loved teaching and was always ready to help those with which he came in contact.

Al enjoyed the outdoors, especially Canada and Colorado. Woodworking was a hobby that kept him quite busy. When he wasn't building something for his wife Yolonda, he would build something for others and expect nothing in return.

Al was a good Christian, a good family man and a good friend. He will be sadly missed.

Kevin Betler of the Buchannon office spends his leisure time with his children, trout and lake fishing. Kevin enjoys yard work, landscaping, visiting flea markets, and car shows. Jimmy Berry of the Danville office spends his leisure time deer hunting and riding four-wheelers with his wife and son. Jimmy enjoys church work, Bible study and doctrinal issues. Gerry Barton of the Welch office spends his off-duty time working on community projects. Gerry enjoys flea markets and playing with heavy equipment. Randy Smith of the Oak Hill office spends his leisure time with his children collecting arrowheads, flint, and mine script. Randy enjoys biking highways and trails, playing tennis, jogging, surfing the Internet, gardening, and playing chess.

Lewis Vannatter of the Oak Hill office retired July 5th after 16 years as an underground inspector. Good luck Lewis!

Safety instructor Gary McComas has transferred from the Welch Office to the Oak Hill Office.

Mike Rutledge recently transferred from the Oak Hill office to Charleston and is working in Educational Training Materials Development.

What's Cookin'?

Million Dollar Cookies

2 Cups Butter
4 Cups Flour
2 Tsp. Baking Soda
2 Cups Sugar
5 Cups blended oatmeal (measure oatmeal and blend in a blender to a fine powder.)
24 Oz. Chocolate Chips
2 Cups Brown Sugar
1 Tsp. Salt
1-8 Oz. Hershey Bar (grated)
4 Eggs
2 Tsp. Baking Powder
2 Tsp. Vanilla
3 Cups chopped nuts (your choice, but we like pecans best)
Cream the butter and both sugars. Add eggs and vanilla; mix together with the flour, oatmeal, salt, baking powder and soda. Add chocolate chips, Hershey Bar, and nuts. Roll into balls and place two inches apart on a cookie sheet. Bake for 10 minutes at 375 degrees. Makes 112 cookies.



Enjoy the State Fair of West Virginia August 11-19th 2000!

This newsletter is published bimonthly by the WV Office of MHS&T

Governor Cecil H. Underwood

Ron Harris, Director

Contact Person: Dave Kessler

Visit the agency's website at:

www.state.wv.us/mhst