

MINER DETAILS

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BRIDGING THE COMMUNICATION GAP

From The Director's Office

I am pleased with the progress we are making after evaluating the agency over the past six months. I am happy with the positive attitude of the agency's employees and the hard work and effort everyone is putting forth. I want to thank all the underground and surface inspectors for the great job they are doing. I feel that the emphasis our inspectors are placing on individual contacts with miners - where they are being reminded to work safely and not allow complacency to affect safe work habits - is paying off. I also feel the success of the one-on-one contacts will depend on how much we can convince the miners that we are truly concerned about their safety. In closing, I again want to thank all employees for their hard work and dedication to safety.

Ron Harris, Director

Inside this Newsletter:

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

TQM Update

Informational meetings about the revised permitting procedures were conducted statewide during the month of November with mine operators and consultants. The new process became effective December 1, 1997.

A computer-generated certification program will eliminate unnecessary duplication and is scheduled to start January 1, 1998.

The Design Team wishes to sincerely thank Steve Snyder who is leaving the team and to welcome Harry Linville who is the newest team member. A part of the TQM process is to periodically change team members. Three of the original TQM team members have changed. The goal of the Design Team is to have completed the transition by spring of 1998.

The continued success of TQM depends on your suggestions. Submit your ideas on forms available in each regional office.

Agency Accomplishments

Diesel Training

Agency inspection staff and instructors recently attended three-day training sessions concerning underground diesel powered equipment. The training was provided at the MSHA Academy by their instructors and Virginia state mine inspectors.

Topics covered in the classes included MSHA's new Part 75 rules for the use and approval of underground diesel-powered equipment; Part 7 rules for diesel engine and power package approval; and the new ventilation and particulate emissions standards. Engine inspection procedures were also explained. Inspectors were given the hands-on opportunity to examine a typical diesel power package. The Virginia inspectors discussed the

diesel regulations that have been in effect there for a number of years.

The training was well received and will be very helpful to our agency when diesel regulations become finalized for West Virginia.

Good Public Relations

Our Mine Emergency Unit recently appeared at public events which enhanced our agency's image.

In Fayette County, the truck was displayed during Bridge Day with Mike Rutledge, Terry Keen, Leon Bailey, and Bill Tucker greeting the public and offering collector stickers. In McDowell County, Leon Bailey and Tyrone Coleman exhibited the Emergency Unit at the Veteran's Day Parade in Welch. Thousands of spectators received a glimpse of mine rescue equipment used by our mine rescue teams at these two functions.

Pride in our agency is an important quality that should be shown by all employees.

Thank you folks for a job well done!

For Your Information

Mine Map Archives

The Hominy Falls mine disaster focused attention to the danger posed by abandoned underground mines in West Virginia. This accident occurred in May of 1968 when miners in the Saxsewell Number 8 mine cut into previously unknown mine workings which were filled with water. The subsequent inundation killed four miners and trapped another eight for many days. As a result of this disaster, state and federal legislation

was passed in 1969 requiring *Final or Closure Maps* for every underground mine when they cease operations. The legislation also established a Mine Map Archives as a repository for these maps. Maps are collected and sent to OSM's Pittsburgh office for micro-filming and indexing.

From a sparse beginning of about 1,000 maps, the WV mine map archives has grown to over 44,000 images. Unfortunately, the current collection of maps accounts for less than one third of the estimated number of underground mines that have operated in this state. The majority of the maps date from the last thirty years with a few from the 1800's.

The micro-film data is used almost daily by consultants, mining companies, state and federal agencies, and other interested persons. We are constantly looking for maps to add to the archives. Special arrangements can be made to return maps to private individuals once they have been micro-filmed. If you know anyone who has maps they would be willing to loan or contribute, please contact Dave Kessler.

Winter Driving Tips

Be a Smart Winter Driver

- Leave early and expect any trip to take longer than normal.
- Slow Down! Slick pavement means reduced traction. On snow or ice, you should drive much slower than the posted speed limit.
- Increase your following distance. It can take three to ten times farther to stop on winter-slick pavement than on a dry road.
- Avoid quick acceleration, hard braking, and fast turns. Remember, if your car has antilock brakes, do not pump the brake pedal.
- Winterize your car before the snow starts to fly.

Motorist Checklist

- Clean all snow and ice from your windows and mirrors before traveling.
- Make sure all lights are working and always use your headlights.
- Keep wiper blades in good condition and keep windshield washer fluid levels full.
- Check tires for tread and proper inflation and add weight to rear-wheel-drive vehicles.
- Be aware of carbon monoxide hazards when idling your vehicle for an extended period of time.

Did You Know?

WV Diesel Equipment Commission

The WV Diesel Equipment Commission has continued to meet several times during the last few months. The focus of these meetings has been to review technical aspects of diesel usage in underground mines. For example, the commission has met in Triadelphia, WV at the MSHA Approval and Certification Center to review their diesel approval process and MSHA's current diesel regulations. The commission has observed an operating diesel-equipped mine and has received presentations by several diesel machinery manufacturing representatives. Future meetings are scheduled.

Selected Vehicle Lease

Terms

The following are some of the major points of our agency's vehicle lease terms: Lessee is responsible for operating expenses, damages, abuse, accidents, neglect, maintenance, and cleaning as well as payment of parking and driving violations. Seat belts must be worn at all times. All state of WV and other applicable motor vehicle laws, including speed limits, must be obeyed. Any modifications to

the vehicle must have the express written approval of the Fleet Management Office. Lessee agrees to return vehicle for underutilization, misuse, serious DMV violations, at-fault accidents, or any other inappropriate activities at the discretion of the Lessor. Vehicle condition at the end of the lease must be relative to the age/mileage of the vehicle. Any necessary repairs/reconditioning above normal guidelines for age and level of service are the responsibility of Lessee. Vehicle must be locked at all times when not in use.

Compliance Calendar

A twelve month calendar is available with a list of things mine operators should do on a daily, weekly, monthly, semi-annual, and annual basis. It also includes a list of items that require special attention. The calendar is in its second year of use in the Welch office.

The calendar was introduced to assist operators in meeting both state and federal rules and regulations. The calendars are produced in ledger size, but can be copied in other sizes.

A copy of the calendar has been distributed to each Inspector-at-Large.

Up Close and Personal

The Newsletter Team wishes to thank Richard Boggess who is leaving the team, and to welcome Wayne Ashby who is the newest member.

Those celebrating their 50th birthday in December are Sandy Bailey and Jim Whetsell. Others who turned 50 in 1997 are Bobby Thornsby, Billy Dotson, and John Spatafore.



Season's Greetings