



# MINER DETAILS



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## BRIDGING THE COMMUNICATION GAP

### Agency Accomplishments

#### Mine Rescue Vehicle

The first action the new mine rescue truck saw was at the Pinnoak No. 50 mine near Pinville, WV in May 2004. The additional space allowed four mine rescue apparatus to be RZ tested at the same time and at least 2 other team members were able to move about in the truck without obstruction. The new truck has enough storage for all the needed equipment and allows work to be performed inside. The truck was taken from the Pinnoak No. 50 mine to the CEDAR project in Gilbert, WV and from Gilbert to The West Virginia Coal Festival in Madison, WV. The truck was opened to the public and was viewed by 2 to 3 thousand visitors. All were impressed.



#### Mine Rescue Contest

The State Mine Rescue Contest will be held July 14 & 15 at the Mine Academy.

#### 2003 Annual Report

The 2003 Annual Report is now available. Copies are being sent to each Regional office for distribution to employees. Again this year the cost to the general public for the publication is \$12.00.

#### Electrical Inspector Exam

An examination for Electrical Inspector (only) will be given at the Oak Hill Regional Office on September 8, 2004. Application to

take the test must be received no later than July 26. Application forms are available from our agency website.

#### Digitizing Mine Maps

The U.S. Department of Labor, Mine Safety & Health Administration recently awarded the State of West Virginia, Office of Miners' Health Safety & Training a grant in the amount of \$1,200,000 to support a project entitled "Digitizing Mine Maps". The purpose of the grant is for digitizing mine maps and developing technologies to detect mine voids. This effort and these monies will be shared with the WV Geological & Economic Survey. Currently nine summer interns are working with Monte Hieb, J. D. Higginbotham, and Steve Womack on this project. Nick Fedorko is coordinating the WVGES side of the project. The grant will enable the state to collect, copy and georeference thousands of undocumented abandoned mine maps. This will decrease the exposure of those in the mining industry to the hazards of unplanned cut-through into inundated mine voids. Work is progressing and we will follow-up with additional information in future newsletters.

#### CEDAR Project

For the third year, MHS&T participated in the CEDAR project (Coal Education Development and Resource of Southern West Virginia). Eighteen schools from Mingo, Logan and Boone counties were represented at this educational fair, which emphasizes coal awareness. A total of 251 projects created by students in

grades K-12 were displayed. Over 1,500 visitors viewed the projects and exhibits.

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#### Did You Know?

##### Apprentice Miner Guidelines

The upturn in mine employment lately has brought many apprentice miners into the industry. Here is a review of some of the guidelines used to direct their safe transition to becoming a certified miner. Apprentices must have attended an approved training program 40 hours for surface or 80 hours for underground, pass an examination, and be issued an apprentice card before starting work at the mine as an apprentice. During the first 90 days of employment and during the first 54 shifts worked the apprentice must remain in sight and sound of a certified miner or foreman at all times and on the same side of the belt or machine as the person training and looking out for him. One certified miner may look after only one apprentice, one certified foreman or assistant foreman may look after no more than three apprentices on a section actively producing coal, or five apprentices outby a section or on an idle section. Apprentice miners are not allowed to set temporary roof support but they are allowed to set roadway posts such as setting up pillar blocks on a pillar section. Apprentices are not allowed to participate in an equipment move such as tramping or transporting face equipment in or out of the mine, but may help move up section belts, track or power. The

apprentice may begin to learn to operate machinery anytime during his initial 90 days of employment so long as he remains in sight and sound and on the same side of the machine as the person looking after him. He must complete six months of employment *and* have at least 108 shifts worked in order to qualify to take the certified miner exam. It is a good idea to have someone regularly speak with and act as a spokesperson for the apprentice, because the new miner may be reluctant to express concerns, ask questions or advice of his foreman.

### Social Security Privacy

On March 25<sup>th</sup> of this year, Governor Wise issued Executive Order No. 7-03. This executive order deals with privacy protection as it applies to Social Security numbers. It also established a project team to help agencies identify potential privacy problems and implement procedures and privacy policies. As each of you know, MHS&T collects and maintains Social Security numbers for many data files ranging from miner certification information to company ownership data, as well as employee information. Though we have not issued a policy yet – there are procedures we should all follow with regard to SSNs. First, we must not release SSNs to anyone. If a copy is made of a completed form (such as an injury report) with the SSN showing – the number should be marked out or removed. Secondly, files containing SSNs should be secured and only agency employees allowed access to search and review those documents. This means no public access to documents containing SSNs. A step all employees can take is to stop placing your SSN on leave requests (future forms will have it removed). The agency will address some of these issues in the forthcoming policy as well as modifications to forms and data lookups. This is an on-going process and follow-up articles will be published.

### Seatbelt Safety

Be sure equipment operators are wearing their seatbelts. Recently a dozer operators life was saved in the Welch Region when his machine tumbled off a 138 foot highwall. On the other hand, a truck driver lost his life in the Danville Region when he either jumped or was thrown from a coal truck. Investigators believe that had the victim remained in the truck with his seatbelt securely fastened, the accident would probably not have been fatal.

### Pinnoak No. 50 Update

The Pinnoak No. 50 mine near Pineville, WV experienced an explosion on Labor Day 2003. During restoration work, the mine exploded a second time and therefore the mine was ordered closed from September of 2003. In February 2004, MHS&T employees and mine rescue teams entered the mine and began explorations to recover the mine. The teams worked 24-7 when they were not gassed out of the mine. All underground areas of the mine were examined and recovered by the last of May. The longwall section was the last section to be recovered. The mine returned to normal operations in the first part of June. As of the last week of June, the long wall section had mined out to the recovery entries and was being moved to a new section in the beginning of July, 2004. Congratulations to the mine rescue personnel on a difficult job well done!

### For Your Information

#### Have you been “phished”?

If you have recently received an e-mail with the subject either: “ebay update information” or “verify and update your paypal information?” If so, it is most likely these were phishing (pronounced “fishing”) attempts. Phishing attacks use 'spoofed' e-mails and fraudulent websites designed to fool recipients into divulging personal financial data such as credit card numbers, account usernames and passwords, social security numbers, etc. By hijacking the trusted brands of well-known banks, online retailers

and credit card companies, phishers are able to convince up to 5% of recipients to respond to them. The best solution to these attacks is to not give out your personal information. You can also go to sites such as <http://www.antiphishing.org/> for the latest information. If you have been tricked into divulging your private information, this site provides information and advice.

### Incremental Pay

Once again the annual increment pay will be issued in a separate payment with the second regular paycheck on July 30. Deductions and withholding will be calculated at about the same rate as your normal pay. The state will again be offering employees the chance to defer a portion of their pay to the deferred compensation plan (457 plan). The forms for the deferred option can be obtained from your regional office or downloaded from the West Virginia Retirement website at: [www.retirement.com](http://www.retirement.com).

### Up Close and Personal

**Marvin Given**, underground inspector has been transferred from the Welch region to the Oak Hill Region. This will allow Marvin to work closer to his home. Congratulations Marvin. Also, **Kendal Smith**, has transferred to the Oak Hill Region as an Electrical Inspector. **Lloyd Collins** is well and recuperating at home from heart surgery. Get well soon Lloyd!



**Have a Safe Summer!**

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

*Governor Bob Wise  
Doug Conaway, Director  
Contact Person: Dave Kessler*

Visit the agency's website at:

[www.wvminesafety.org](http://www.wvminesafety.org)

