

MINER DETAILS

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BRIDGING THE COMMUNICATION GAP

From The Director's Office

Due to the Director's procrastination, this issue of the Director's Office will not provide the usual intelligent, thought-provoking, action-generating discussion I know all of you have come to expect, and look so very much forward to reading. Instead, I offer some words of wisdom from H. Jackson Brown, Jr. . I am sure we can all find at least one observation from these quotes from which we can benefit. For those of you who may become upset because you really wanted to hear from the Director, don't cancel your subscription to "Miner Details." I'll do better next time.

Life's Little Lessons

"There are good neighbors wherever you live. When your phone doesn't ring, you should ring someone else's. When you're too busy for friends, you're too busy. Saying "hi" to somebody today can result in a new friend tomorrow. Keep your words soft and tender because tomorrow you may have to eat them. Lending money to friends and relatives causes them to get amnesia. Students who pay their own way through college almost never flunk out. Life is like a ten-speed bicycle; most of us have gears we never use. Opportunities are never lost; someone will take the one you miss. The more mistakes you make, the smarter you get. Taking a break in the middle of the job isn't half as relaxing as taking a break after the job is finished. If you are still talking about what you did yesterday, you haven't done much today. A minute of extra thinking beforehand can save

hours of worry later. No situation is so bad that losing your temper won't make it worse. A kindness done is never lost, it may take a while, but like a suitcase on a luggage carousel, it will return again. People surprise you. Sometimes the person you expect to kick you when you're down will be the one to help you get back up."

Stephen F. Webber

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TQM Update

TQM (Total Quality Management) has become a useful and vital part of MHST. Many old, inherent problems are being addressed with this management style. TQM has enabled us to streamline our agency and has increased morale by addressing these problems and enabling us to participate in our own management. TQM is the management style of today. A new charter team was recently created by the design team. The "IF-018 N.O.V. Team" was created on April 24th. This team has been chartered to review the IF-018 N.O.V. form (notice of violation) and recommend changes or revisions that are needed. Changes, such as making the form more user friendly, removing unnecessary information and creating more space for the body of the violation, are areas of concern.

Team members: John Scott, Joe Atha, and Lloyd Collins. John Larry is Team Leader and Eugene White is Facilitator.

Agency Accomplishments

New Trucks

All surface mine inspectors recently were issued new vehicles. The new trucks are three-quarter ton GMC Sierras with extended cabs, a long wheelbase, and gold paint. The trucks are heavy-duty type with eight-lug wheels and lots of springs. They seem to be well liked by the inspectors.

Electrical Retraining

On March 13, MSHA and MHST met with personnel from the mining industry at the National Mine Academy to discuss new criteria regarding annual electrical retraining of certified mine electricians. During the seminar, guidelines were set forth to regulate the content of materials and information taught in the retraining classes.

MSHA electrical instructors and inspectors modeled proper teaching techniques and the use of teaching aids and materials by teaching classes involving low/medium electrical circuits, high voltage circuits, and the Code of Federal Regulations. The WV State Regulations regarding electrical law was skillfully presented by Jimmy Berry, electrical inspector in the Danville office.

Prospective electrical retraining instructors were informed that each instructor must submit an

individual training program tailored to specifically meet the needs of the students attending the class. To meet the approval of MSHA, the submitted program must include training on mining equipment and electrical systems comparable to that encountered by the students on a daily basis at their place of employment. Special emphasis was placed on time management in the classroom and electrical retraining administrative issues. Retraining instructors are challenged to be creative and to teach electrical retraining classes which are interesting as well as informative.

For Your Information

Vacation loans up to \$1,000 dollars are available for Public Employee Credit Union members at a special rate of 12% APR for a twelve-month period. The offer is good for the April 15th through August 31st vacation season. The credit union is also offering discount coupons for most of the major amusement parks including Disney World, Opryland, Busch Gardens, and Kings Island. Contact the credit union at 558-0566 for more information.

Up Close and Personal Thank You!

Val Hoffman wishes to express his sincere thanks to all those inspectors who so generously donated personal leave time. This is a shining example of how MHST employees step in to help one another in a time of crisis.

Congratulations to Chuck Webb, underground inspector in the Oak Hill office, and his wife, Wanda, on the birth of their first grandson, Charles Cameron Webb, born on March 29.

Congratulations to Dennie Ballard, Assistant Inspector-at-Large of the Danville Office, and his wife, Barbara, on their 25th wedding anniversary, April 14.

Congratulations to Richard Boggess, District Inspector in the Danville Office, and his wife, Jolene, on their 25th wedding anniversary, May 13 and to their daughter, Marlayna, who graduated top in her class, Summa Cum Laude, from Marshall University School of Nursing.

Did You Know?

The Year 2000

When computers and data systems were first being designed, data storage space was always at a premium. Most data systems use a two digit data field instead of four, thus saving two spaces. With the year 2000 approaching, that will no longer work because the year "00" is not a whole number. Almost anything with a date-critical field (such as taxes, banking, and insurance) may be adversely affected. Anyone who uses a computer needs to be aware of this problem. Government agencies and private companies will spend literally billions of dollars to fix this potential disaster.

A recent trip to the local courthouse brought the issue into sharp focus. Completing a legal document to be renewed in three years, a county employee had to revert to pencil and paper to record renewal dates since the computers and software could not deal with the year 2000.

MHST is also having to face this issue. Our agency will need to focus on three distinct areas: the Safety Information System (SIS), PCs, and software. With the SIS, data files will need to be modified, screens revised and most importantly, programs which manipulate the data will need to be changed. The issue with the PCs is whether they can be updated to "year 2000 compliance". Our understanding is that most 386, and some 486 PCs may not be updateable. For the newer Pentiums, upgrades should be available and for any new purchases, compliance to the new standard will be mandatory. The computers not in compliance may

still be used for some tasks, but not for jobs involving embedded dates. The same holds true with software packages. Some may be upgradeable, and some may need to be replaced. New software will be required to be compliant with year 2000 standards.

ARMPS

Analysis of Retreat Mining Pillar Stability (ARMPS) is a computer program developed by the US Bureau of Mines. This program is used to design supporting coal pillars for the room and pillar mining method. Such factors as depth of cover, coal height, entry width, cross-cut spacing, and the load-bearing capacity of the coal pillars, are taken into account by the program when calculating an adequate pillar size. This program estimates the weight load that will be applied to the coal pillars during all phases of pillar development and extraction. The goal of ARMPS is to help ensure that the pillars developed are of adequate size for all anticipated loading conditions. The ARMPS calculation method is currently being verified by back-analysis of more than 110 actual case histories from ten states. Production pillars with an ARMPS stability factor of 1.5 or greater have a high probability of being mined and extracted without problems. This 1.5 safety factor is currently being added to mine roof control plans as a minimum requirement for pillar size. This easy-to-use program is a valuable tool to the mining industry. The ARMPS computer program is freely distributed and is available from the Danville office. A special thanks to Wayne Ashby of that office for his help on this article.

Happy 134th Birthday, West Virginia! - June 20, 1997

