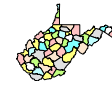




MINER DETAILS



Volume 7 Issue 2

WV Office of Miners' Health, Safety & Training

March 2002

BRIDGING THE COMMUNICATION GAP

From the Director's Office Volunteers Needed

The Bureau of Commerce has an "employee satisfaction committee" and Kathy Slone is the representative on that committee from our agency.

The first project the committee undertook was the BOC picnic, held in September 2001. Now the committee is beginning a second project, "Employee of the Quarter / Employee of the Year" Program. This program will give out monetary awards to the winners, one for each quarter. Awards will be given to one agency employee of the year (chosen from the 4 quarterly winners) and a BOC employee of the year (chosen from the eight agency employees of the year winners). A letter outlining the program will come from Commissioner Bailey and will be included with the March 31, payroll.

We need volunteers for a selection committee to meet 1-2 times per quarter. The committee should be equally represented from the following categories: Inspection, Training, Supervisor, and Administrative Support. If you are interested in serving, please contact me immediately.

Legislative Update

By the time you read this newsletter, the legislature will have completed the current regular legislative session and hopefully we will have definitive answers to the two key items concerning our agency as well as several issues concerning state employees. The funding level of our budget will not be known until several days after the end of the current session when an extended session takes up budgetary concerns. If the

Governor's recommended funding level for our agency is approved, we will have some additional monies for the upcoming fiscal year. The other item of note is a bill that would enable modifications to the current penalty assessment system. All agency employees should also be aware that the Governor requested a pay increase package and a lifting of the cap on the incremental (years of service) pay. Keep in mind all of this is very tentative and may change.

Did You Know?

Electricity From Chemical Action by Jim Berry. To find out how the chemical action in batteries works, you might imagine that you can see the electrons and what happens to them in a primary electric cell. The basic source of electricity produced by chemical action is the electric cell, and when two or more cells are combined, they form a battery. First, you would notice the parts of the cell and their relation to each other. You would see a case in which two plates of different metals, separated from each other, are immersed in the liquid that fills the containers. Watching the parts of the cell and the electrons in the cell you would see that the liquid, which is called the electrolyte, is pushing electrons onto one of the plates and taking them off the other plate. The action of the electrolyte in carrying the electrons from one plate to the other is actually a chemical reaction between the electrolyte and the two plates. This action changes chemical energy into electrical charges on the cell plates and terminals.

Inside this Newsletter:

- *From the Director's Office*

- *Did You Know?'*
- *Agency Accomplishments*
- *For Your Information*
- *Up Close and Personal*

Agency Accomplishments

Mine Inspector Exam

The coal mine inspectors examination will be given the first week of May 2002. Completed applications must be received in the Charleston office by Friday, April 26, 2002 by 4:00 p.m. No Exceptions! Applications may be obtained by downloading from our web page at www.state.wv.us/mhst or by contacting Tina Estep-Bowles at 558-1425 Ext. 21. Applications are being accepted for inspector, safety instructor, and electrical inspector.

For Your Information

Mine Rescue Training

In mid February, our mine rescue team went through a week of hazardous material (hazmat) training at the Mine Academy in Beckley. Not only were the classroom sessions long and difficult, but at the end of the week the team had to go through a very tough simulation. The simulation took place at the old turnpike tunnel, now known as the Center for National Response's Memorial Tunnel complex. The scenario was of a large building collapse and an attempt to rescue survivors. This was a pilot training project to see how mine rescue teams could be utilized in these types of disasters. The drill was by all accounts extremely difficult, and very realistic. The simulation was attended by several media representatives and some very positive news articles were written, including one in the New York Daily News. You can read a

couple of the articles on our web page.

Monitoring Explosions in Sealed Areas Seven explosions of methane or coal dust occurred inside worked out and sealed gob areas of underground coal mines in the U.S. from 1994 to 2000. These explosions, believed to have been started by lightning, destroyed some seals and caused damage outside the sealed areas, however no one was injured. Because lightning occurs in most mining areas, officials suspect similar gob gas explosions might be occurring in other sealed areas and going undetected. The Pittsburgh Research Laboratory of NIOSH studied the use of common automobile tire pressure gauges as measuring devices to monitor explosion pressures behind sealed areas. The sliding-scale type tire gauges were epoxied to a 1/4 elbow with a pipe that extended through the seal. Tests have shown that this simple device can accurately measure and record pressures that occur inside the sealed area. Any pressure rise can be identified during routine weekly exams of the seals or shortly after a lightning storm. For more information on this study and a photo of the tire gauge installation, visit the NIOSH web site at www.cdc.gov/niosh.

Different Types of Roof Support There are many different types of roof support. If your mine has a particular need, someone most likely manufactures just what you require. For example, in a coal seam 40" or less, maintaining the original mining height is a must for clearance reasons. A stiff type roof support that provides a high support value and allows very little floor and roof convergence may be necessary. Devices such as donut cribs, steel sets, and timbers will reach their support capacity and begin to fail with as little as 2" or 3" of convergence.



A 22" donut crib will accept approximately 550 tons of load and allow only 1.5" of convergence.



At 1.80" of convergence the support value is lost. In other areas of a mine, maintaining a seam height is not as important and wooden cribs may provide all the support needed. With more floor to roof convergence.



this wooden crib is providing approximately 100 tons of support and has allowed about 16" of convergence.

Coal Mine Inspectors Board The Coal Mine Inspectors Examining Board is responsible for administering the mine inspector examination. The five board members are Dr. Sydney Peng of WVU, Rick Glover and Hoya Clemons representing the mine workers, Bill Wooton and Charles

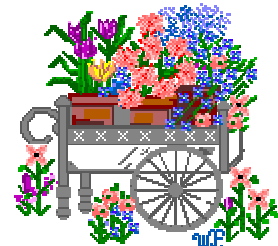
Justice representing the coal companies.

PEIA PEIA's open enrollment dates for the new year beginning July 1, is April 1, through May 3. Be watching for plan booklets in your mail soon.

Up Close and Personal Jennifer Daniels has resigned from the Charleston office. Best of wishes Jennifer.

Larry Mills of the Buckhannon office will be retiring at the end of March after more than 21 years service. Congratulations Larry!

Charles Justice Selected Miner of the Month. The Aracoma Council of the Holmes Safety Association has announced that Charles C. Justice has been chosen as Miner of the Month for December 2001. He is the treasurer of the King Coal Highway Authority, and also a member of our Coal Mine Inspectors Examining Board. His honesty and work ethics has made him a leader in the coal community where he is highly respected.



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.state.wv.us/mhst