



# MINER DETAILS



Volume 6 Issue 1

WV Office of Miners' Health, Safety & Training

February 2001

## BRIDGING THE COMMUNICATION GAP

### From the Director's Office

Doug Conaway was appointed as our new director effective January 16, 2001. Doug will be ready to give us an update from the director's office in our next issue. He has been very busy with the transition to a new position. Congratulations Doug!

Director Doug Conaway reminds us that Governor Wise has issued an executive order requiring a budget cut of three percent for the remainder of fiscal year 2000-01 for all state government. In order to comply with the executive order, effective 1-16-01 all expenditures must receive prior approval from the director's office before any purchases are made. We are to conserve costs wherever possible.

### Agency Accomplishments

#### MSHA State Grants

The West Virginia 2001 MSHA state grant has been approved with a modest increase for the upcoming year. The delay in receiving this 2001 grant was due to Congress not approving the federal budget until recently. The agency has several current and up-coming projects, such as the *NEW HIGHWALL MINER* training video, which will be completed shortly. Also, we are currently working to update the 40-hour surface apprentice course. Upon completion, the entire course will be available on CD thus drastically reducing the cost of a new program. The 40-hour project is a cooperative effort with WVU Mining Extension Office.

Project development time that Instructors and Inspectors spend on creating new and innovative educational training materials can

now be tracked on the Safety Information System.

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### For Your Information

#### "Miner Details" A Retrospective

This issue of *Miner Details* marks a milestone. We have completed five years of publication for a total of twenty-eight newsletters. Our first newsletter was issued in May of 1996. We finished that year with three more issues and then began the bi-monthly publication cycle in February 1997. During the years, we have tried to make *Miner Details* a useful, informative voice for the agency. We have had articles ranging from safety issues to favorite recipes. We have greeted new employees and said good-bye to others. We have announced births and written memorials.

Every issue of the newsletter includes a message from the Director's office as well as details of agency activities. We also try to include informational articles directed specifically to our employees. These have included the recent series on roof-bolting and roof-control and SCSR problems. Periodically, we have included articles on health issues and useful web sites. One of our most popular columns is *Up Close and Personal* where we learn a little bit about each other. Recently, we have begun to include photographs with some of our

articles. We hope this adds to the interest.

For the future, we hope to continue to provide you with a useful voice. However, we are always looking for articles and story ideas. This is your newsletter. If you have an idea for an article or if you want to write a story, let us know. Send it in, we will probably use it. Over the years approximately ten employees have "served time" on the newsletter staff. Want to help? Volunteer to join us.

#### 2001 Mine Rescue Schedule

The following is the mine rescue contest schedule for 2001:

St. Clairsville, OH - June 20, 21  
Morgantown, WV - August 15, 16  
Southern WV - August 29, 30  
Louisville KY - September 17-21

#### Winter Cold or Allergies?

Each year many people battle to find relief from nasal congestion, sore throat, coughing, sneezing, and watery eyes. A growing number of people are beginning to question whether a common cold is to blame or whether seasonal allergies are causing their symptoms. A cold can be defined as a viral invasion of the body's immune system. However, an allergy is defined as the body's response and reaction to an attacking foreign substance. Like a cold, if allergies are left untreated, they can potentially develop into a more serious problem such as sinusitis. Cold symptoms typically occur gradually and may last four to ten days with a low-grade fever. Allergies usually occur suddenly with similar symptoms but people with allergies do not have fever. Hand washing is still one of the most effective ways to prevent

catching a cold. For allergy relief, try to keep windows closed and furnace filters clean. Avoid indoor and outdoor areas that have known allergens such as pollen, pet dander, or dust. You should dust and vacuum frequently to reduce the amount of allergens that settle on surfaces. Wash blankets, sheets and clothing frequently in hot water. Cover your mattress, box springs, and pillows with non-allergic casings.

## Did You Know?

### Abutment Loading

Normally a mine will not have to deal with abutment loads if second mining is not performed by the mine operator. But more and more mines are being opened underneath, over, and between older mines that did perform second mining. When second mining occurs, barrier blocks large enough to control the weight induced by the second mining are left behind. Some of the coal pillars that were intended to be mined could not because of the conditions in the area of these pillars. When a mine passes under, over, or between these areas, the load carried by these barriers or unmined pillars is transferred through the interburden to the working mine. These loads are not limited to directly under or over these areas. Normally the roof breaks and falls to an arch; which is normally a 21 to 25 degree angle. This is why weight is experienced a short distance before and after the mine developments are actually over or under the barrier or unmined pillars. In most mines, the worst squeeze is experienced when going onto or coming off these unmined areas of the older mines. The higher the depth of cover and the smaller the interburden between the old and new mines, the more problems with weight can be expected. In some of the combinations, the area becomes unminable. In many cases, narrowing the entry widths and

increasing the pillar sizes will provide a stable environment through these areas. Longer roof bolts may not help with the abutment load, but may be necessary because of breaking roof. Since the mine roof and floor are converging, a floor-to-roof type support will be necessary to help control the weight. It might be wise to begin additional roof support measures approximately one crosscut before and after entering these areas. Study over and underlay maps to locate and make preparations for these areas.

### Self-contained Self-Rescuers

The rescuers being carried by our inspectors have presented some problems recently. The top lid of two units became tightly sealed so as not to be easily removed. It seems day-to-day temperature changes cause a vacuum to develop inside our units. Be prepared to hit your rescuer top lid with or against something to help you open it.

### Ventilating Seals

"Air that has been used to ventilate seals shall not be used to ventilate any working place in any working mine." [22A-2-5 (b)] Although not acceptable under current law, for a brief time several years ago, air used to ventilate seals was allowed to ventilate a working section. Some of these situations still exist in our mines today.

## Up Close and Personal

### Roger Powell,

Inspector-at-Large of the Fairmont office retired January 31<sup>st</sup> after 21 years with our agency. Good luck Roger!

**Brian Mills** has been promoted to Inspector-at-Large of the Fairmont office as of 2-1-01.

**Bill Tucker** has been promoted to Assistant Inspector-at-Large in the Oak Hill office effective 3-1-01. He started work there 2-8-01. Congratulations Brian and Bill!

**Barry Fletcher** of the Buckhannon office spends his leisure time working in the yard, going to the movies, deer and turkey hunting, and watching his youngest son play high school football. His two oldest boys are both juniors at Marshall University and play rugby for the university. Barry enjoys working in the local church, and singing and listening to music. He shops with his wife at antique shows and yard sales for old pictures, cards, and frames.

**Colin Simmons** of the Fairmont office spends his leisure time with children and grandchildren. Colin enjoys umpiring high school baseball and playing basketball. He enjoys West Virginia University basketball, baseball, football, and rifle.

**Lee Sipple** of the Danville office spends his leisure time with his grandchildren at karate classes, hunting ginseng, walking his dogs and collecting coins. Lee enjoys backyard gardening, keeping tropical fish and watching boxing and toughman contests.

**Tina Estep Bowles** of the Charleston office spends her leisure time reading, cross-stitching, and country line dancing. Tina enjoys horseback riding, flea markets, and amateur photography.



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

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*Visit the agency's website at:*

[www.state.wv.us/mhst](http://www.state.wv.us/mhst)