

MINER DETAILS

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BRIDGING THE COMMUNICATION GAP

From The Director's Office

As most of you know, I have been with the agency for many years. I have worked with four directors and four commissioners who gave me the opportunity to learn from their mistakes and capitalize on their strong points. Even with this, I know I will make errors. When this happens, I expect and hope someone in the agency will let me know so we can make corrections and move forward. When I accepted the position of director, I committed to work with everyone in the mining industry to make the mines in this state as safe as possible. I believe that in order to be productive, a mine has to be safe. Also, when I accepted the position, I committed to make the agency a place of which we can all be proud. I do not expect to accomplish these broad-range goals overnight, and I know I cannot accomplish these goals by myself. I realize that at some point I will be a former director as were my predecessors. I hope it will be said that I did a good job. I have been around long enough to know that the people in the agency will be the determining factor. I plan to work hard to accomplish the goals I have set for our agency. I do not expect anyone in the agency to work for me, however, I look forward to working together with everyone.

Ron Harris, Director

TQM Update

The Permitting Process Team reviewed the permitting process, streamlined and standardized the procedure, and developed a policy manual. A permitting handbook has been created that greatly

simplifies the process. This handbook gives step-by-step instructions on how to permit a surface or an underground coal mine. Also included in this comprehensive package are requirements and forms for all side permits. A separate section for independent contractors fully explains all application requirements and includes all necessary forms and procedures pertaining to that line of work. This permit handbook contains a table of contents with tabs A thru S so anyone can go directly to the section that pertains to them. Detailed instructions are included in all sections. The team has met their goal. The handbook will save our agency and the public time and money.

Inside this Newsletter:

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Agency Accomplishments

MHST has made revisions to several publications and forms. These revisions are intended to provide more up-to-date information to the mining industry and to streamline some of the current processes.

New violation forms have been designed and are being printed. There are actually two forms, a revised 18 and a new 18B. The 18B is to be used in cases where

multiple violations are being issued during an inspection. Once an 18 has been completed the 18B can be used for subsequent violations. It should save time since less information is required.

A new inspection cover sheet is being designed. It is hoped the new design will allow a single cover sheet for all types of inspections. The new form will also be reduced in size from a 14 inch to a standard 11 inch form.

New underground and surface law books have been published and are currently available. These books are pocket-sized, indexed, and include regulations as well as the West Virginia Code. An additional feature is the staple-and-glue bindings along with a heavy grade cover stock which should extend the life of these publications. The books are priced \$6.00 for the underground and \$5.00 for the surface.

A new full-sized law book containing the complete West Virginia Code and Regulations of this agency is being printed. This book will be in a standard 8.5 by 11 inch format and will be indexed. The cost for this publication will be determined by printing cost.

A new Surface Mine Foreman Guide is currently available, and the Underground Mine Foreman Guide should be published shortly. Both books feature new and revised questions, sample forms, and photos. Mine foreman examinations will be based on these starting in January 1998. The surface book sells for \$12.00 while the cost for the underground

book will be determined by printing costs.

The 1996 edition of the MHST *Annual Report* is now available. This book includes a photo section for the first time since the 1960's. Also, a section on agency accomplishments was added in this edition. The cost is \$10.00.

An *Electrical Study Guide* is under consideration for future revision and a new *Shaft/Slope Foreman Guide* is being developed.

Silicosis Prevention

Recently, MHST inspectors participated in the "Prevention of Silicosis" talks, contacting 5,346 employees at 286 operations. The agency received \$30,000 to complete this task from the MSHA State Grants Program. As usual, the inspectors are to be commended for a job well done. The program had a positive impact and was well received by the workers and the operators. We hope to continue this program and obtain additional funding. Positive attitudes get things done.

For Your Information

The 42nd Annual Southern West Virginia Mine Rescue and First Aid Association contest was held August 27 and 28, 1997 at the MSHA Mine Academy.

Seventeen teams demonstrated their skills at mine rescue work during the "two-hour" mine rescue problem on the first day of the contest.

On the second day, seven teams competed in the "First Aid" portion of the contest, while members of nine teams took part in the "EMT" competition.

Eighteen individual team members demonstrated their expert knowledge of mine rescue apparatus operation and repair during the "Benchman" contest also held that day.

Congratulations to the winners of these contests:

Two Hour Contest: U. S. Steel Mining - Pinnacle Team - Pineville, WV

First Aid Contest: EACC - Coal River Team - Seth, WV

Combination: EACC - Harris Team - Twilight, WV

EMT Competition: Peabody Coal Co. - Camp Complex Team - Marion, KY

Benchman: Dave Blankenship of EACC - Harris Team - Twilight, WV

Up Close and Personal

Amanda Harris, ten year old daughter of Director Ron Harris, competed in the Junior Olympics which was held August 5-10 in Charlotte NC. Amanda competed against girls from all over the USA in the ten and under category. She competed in ten swimming events, bringing home one gold, two silver, and seven bronze medals. She received the gold medal in the 200 meter individual medley. Amanda is a member of the Concord C-Lions Swim Team.

Congratulations to Gary Ball, former Inspector-at-Large in the Danville office, on his promotion to Deputy Director.

Congratulations to Harry Linville, former Assistant Inspector-at-Large in the Danville office, on his promotion to Inspector-at-Large.

The Design Team wishes to thank Eugene White who is leaving the team, and to welcome Richard Boggess who is the newest member.

The Newsletter Team wishes to thank Randy Smith who is leaving the team, and to welcome Lloyd Collins who is the newest member.

Did You Know?

House Bill 2890, passed by the Legislature April 10 of this year, placed into effect a new section in the mining law called Article 2A. Use of Diesel-Powered Equipment in Underground Coal Mines. The bill also made changes to 22A-2-37 by removing certain language pertaining to "animal haulage" and changed paragraph (n) to read as

follows: "Underground equipment powered by internal combustion engines using petroleum products, alcohol, or any other compound shall not be used in a coal mine, unless the equipment is diesel-powered equipment approved, operated and maintained as provided in article two-a of this chapter."

WV Diesel Equipment Commission

The newly-created WV Diesel Equipment Commission has met several times since the diesel legislation was signed. The first meeting was held at the Capitol on August 28. Subsequent meetings were held in September in Charleston and Morgantown. The initial meetings were of an organizational nature. In recent meetings, commission members have begun to discuss the more important issues at hand. The commission is scheduled to tour the Consolidation Coal Company Buchannon Mine in Buchannon, VA on September 26 to observe diesel equipment in an operational environment.

By the end of December 1997, all MHST inspection personnel will have completed a basic introductory diesel equipment course at the MSHA Academy.

Regional Notaries

The Director felt it was important and necessary to have state notaries in each of our regional offices. Now the agency has two notaries in each office, one supervisor and one secretary with the exception of Danville where two secretaries are notaries. All of the notaries are limited to notarizing state-business related documents. They cannot notarize private documents, nor can they assess a fee for their services.

