

MINER DETAILS

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MINERS' HEALTH, SAFETY & TRAINING

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BRIDGING THE COMMUNICATION GAP

From The Director's Office

I would like to thank everyone for a successful staff meeting. It seemed everyone enjoyed themselves and the time away from their normal activities. I think our special guests provided some useful information. As much work as it takes to plan this meeting, I feel the benefit is well worth the effort. I plan to have the 2000 staff meeting about the same time next year. Remember, I asked for your help in getting interesting, relevant guest speakers for next year.

Everyone is aware of our fatality situation. Let's continue to work hard at reducing these fatality numbers. Talk to miners about the need to work safely and to follow approved mining plans. Instructors and inspectors should be aware of the accident rate of a mine regarding roof falls. If a mine is having or has had several roof fall incidents, take time to show our new roof control video. I hope everyone has had the opportunity to view this most recent video. If we have a mine where workers have been caught in-by supports, or if we suspect they may not be following the roof control plan, then an inspector or a safety instructor should make arrangements to show those employees the new video.

We have utilized many resources developing videos to impress upon miners the importance of doing the right thing. Let's use them frequently during our safety inspections. I thank everyone for their commitment to a safer mining industry.

Ron Harris, Director

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Agency Accomplishments Deep-Cut Safety Program

With all the advantages of remote controlled continuous mining machines, comes the disadvantage of being injured by them or haulage equipment. This type of accident is occurring at an alarming rate but is 100% preventable.

In an effort to prevent this type of accident, the Buckhannon office has developed a program designed to assist the operator in achieving the safest operating locations. This program will assist in properly training the continuous mining machine crew and haulage personnel in the correct operation of remote controlled mining machines.

This is a well-planned program developed after reviewing fatal accidents and after conducting surveys of mining crews and coal operators. This interactive program can be presented in a classroom or bathroom and has been well received by the miners. The program consists of a manual, illustrator boards, scale models, markers, and a video.

This program has been designated by MSHA to be used nationwide in their mine safety training. This is the fourth safety program

developed by MHS&T to be so honored.

Many thanks to John Collins and Kevin Betler of the Buckhannon Office.

MHS&T at the Fair

After a ten-year absence, MHS&T made a re-appearance at the State Fair of West Virginia. Volunteers from Charleston and every regional office offered a continuous presentation of safety videos, handed out souvenirs, and talked to interested passers-by. The effort was well received and we're hoping to return next year, bigger and better.

Reciprocity

As the mining industry continues to evolve, so too do the laws that govern its affairs. A product of this evolution has been the development and implementation of reciprocal laws. The passage of SB 469 during the 1996 regular legislative session began the movement toward reciprocity in WV. This bill redefined certified electrician to include "any person who is qualified as a mine electrician in any state that recognizes certified electricians licensed in WV." In November of that same year, WV entered into a reciprocal agreement with Alabama on electrical certifications; and in December, entered into a similar agreement with Virginia. The passage of HB 2617 during the 1999 regular legislative session established specific criteria for entering into reciprocal agreements with other states to recognize surface and underground mine foreman and other certifications. Since the bills passage, WV entered into

reciprocal agreements with Ohio and Virginia recognizing mine foreman certifications of each. Discussions are continuing with several other states regarding reciprocity. Questions concerning the agreements should be directed to Jeff Robinett or Tyrone Coleman.

For Your Information

Winter Alert!

The following will help prevent explosions and mine fires:

1. Maintain sufficient ventilation.
2. Make frequent tests for methane.
3. Maintain effective bleeder systems and seals.
4. Use special precautions when mining near or into inaccessible areas.
5. Clean up loose coal, coal dust, and other combustible materials.
6. Liberally apply rock dust
7. Maintain water sprays and dust collectors.
8. Maintain electrical equipment in permissible condition.
9. Be sure all electrical circuits are properly protected.

Y2K

Whether for Y2K preparedness or for one of our WV snowstorms, it would be helpful to have some things on hand. The Federal Emergency Management Agency suggests these items:

1. Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits, and vegetables & a manual can opener.
2. Canned or powdered juices, milk, and soups (if powdered, store extra water).
3. Sugar, salt and pepper and high-energy foods like peanut butter, jelly, crackers, granola bars, and trail-mix.
4. Foods for infants, the elderly, or those on special diets should be on your list as well as vitamins.
5. Comfort foods such as cookies, hard candy, sweetened cereals, instant coffee, and tea bags or preferred treats.

We would suggest you have supplemental lighting such as

candles or propane lanterns. (Use extra caution with these items.) A portable radio, flashlight and extra batteries along with potable water need to be included. Don't forget to provide a means of cooking (possibly a camping stove or BBQ grill) as well as a heat source. Any prescriptions for essential medications should be kept filled and available.

Did You Know?

New E-mail System

MHS&T has recently completed assigning all agency employees Internet compliant e-mail accounts. These accounts will allow easier communication between employees and the agency offices. Inspection and safety personnel may utilize a third party e-mail service such as MSN or Yahoo to retrieve and send their messages. Also, a PC in each office has been designated for use by field personnel.

The new e-mail system will allow the exchange of documents, reports, or photographs by simply attaching them to a message and sending them to the recipient(s). For example, to submit an article for *Miner Details*, all you have to do is attach it to an e-mail message to dkessler@mines.state.wv.us.

Accident Reporting Procedures

If you have an auto accident, please contact Art Shumate, Fleet Coordinator, as soon as possible; and submit the original and one copy of an RMI-1 form to Art. Complete this form in full (front and back). Please remember the following. Insured Name is MHS&T and the Owner is the Dept. of Administration, 2019 Wash. St. E., Charleston, WV 25305. Two repair estimates must be submitted with the RMI-1 form. Please send one copy of each estimate with the form, and include a police report whenever possible. If the insurance company declares the vehicle totaled please contact Art Shumate immediately. Keep in mind all vehicles now have a \$1,000 deductible effective 7/1/99. Our agency will be responsible for

the repair if less than \$1000. If more than \$1000 but less than \$2500, call Art for approval. If more than \$2500, an adjuster will be assigned. After the vehicle is repaired, please provide Art Shumate with a letter stating date of completion.

PHH Gas Card

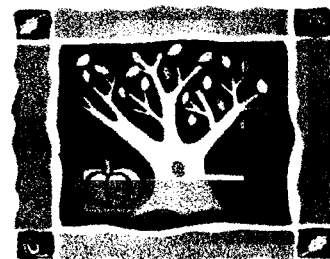
Go Mart will now accept PHH Red Cards for gas purchases.

Up Close and Personal

Donald Dickerson from the Welch office spends his leisure time hunting and fishing, collecting old bottles and knives, wood working, refinishing furniture, flea markets, antique shows, and yard sales. He also enjoys time with family and friends, works with Gideons International, and attends church. Sandra Bailey from the Welch office spends her leisure time boating on Claytor Lake, fishing (catch and release), and vacationing at Florida and South Carolina beaches. Billy Dotson from the Danville office spends his leisure time as a spectator of high school and college basketball and football. He also enjoys hunting and attending church.

Dennis Allen, electrical inspector from the Welch Office, retired with 20 years service in September.

Ron Harris recently presented awards to employees with 20, 25, and 30 years service, and presented the 1999 Employee of the Year awards to Kevin Betler, Linda Miller, and Dave Kessler. Congratulations everyone!



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