

MINER DETAILS

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BRIDGING THE COMMUNICATION GAP

From The Director's Office

The Gap is Narrowing

When talking to field personnel, it never takes long for the question of pay raises to crop up. Looking at the national average per capita income, West Virginia has the second-lowest per capita income in the United States. As per the *Public Affairs Reporter* the gap between the state's personal income and the national average is narrowing. West Virginia personal income increased from 73 percent of the national average in 1990 to 75 percent in 1996. The state's personal income increased from \$14,178 in 1990 to \$18,225 in 1996, an annual growth rate of 4.7 percent. This is well in excess of the national rate of growth and inflation.

Pay raises for our personnel will continue to be top priority for Ron and me during our tenure in Charleston.

Gary Ball, Deputy Director

Agency Accomplishments

Y2K Issue

The year 2000 is looming on the horizon. With less than 600 days to the deadline, many computer systems in both government and private industry have not had their datefields changed from two to four digits (i.e. 98 to 1998). MHS&T recently entered into a contract with MPL Corp. to make our primary data system, the Safety Information System (SIS), year 2000 compliant. Under the terms of the contract, the SIS

components will be converted and tested for Y2K compliance. Most of the work will involve re-writing programs, redesigning screens, and making all references to each year to read as four digits. All work including testing is scheduled to be completed by July 1999.

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Coal Truck Driver Certification

Title 48, Series 3, Section 2.9(c) requires all independent coal truck drivers to be certified effective July 1, 1998. This regulation applies only to independent coal truck drivers, not company employees, and applies at surface and underground mines. You should accept a coal truck driver's certificate (03 card), a surface apprentice miner's certificate (04), a surface miner's certificate (07), or a surface mine foreman certificate (011) for driving a truck. A valid driver's license, sufficient first-aid training, and a certified eight-hour training class are required of all persons seeking the 03 card.

MHS&T Trains South Africans

Recently the *Register-Herald* printed an article concerning mock mine rescue training given to visiting South African miners by instructors from MHS&T.

Instructors Leon Bailey and Mike Rutledge conducted the training July 23rd at the National Mine Health and Safety Academy. This is one good example of the many cooperative efforts of our agency. Congratulations Leon and Mike!

Mine Rescue Contest

August 12 & 13, 1998 presented mine rescue teams an opportunity to display their expertise during the NMRA Post 5 Contest at Morgantown. Eighteen teams took part in the mine rescue competition with four groups also taking part in the first-aid contest. Team members also participated in the Benchman and EMT competition. Working time was the deciding factor for the top three spots in Mine Rescue. Average time for all teams was 81.36 minutes. Congratulations to all those teams and individuals who took part in the contest. Winners are:

Mine Rescue

- 1st Place: EACC Federal No. 2
- 2nd Place: EACC Coal River
- 3rd Place: Southern Ohio CC Meigs No. 31

First-Aid and Combination

- 1st Place: EACC Harris

EMT

- 1st Place: Premier Elkhorn CC Team No. 1

Benchman

- 1st Place: Roger Carpenter of EACC Federal No. 2
- 2nd Place: Dale Exline of Southern Ohio CC Meigs No. 31 mine

TQM Update

18-B Gets Axed

The 18-B violation continuation form that showed up briefly this

year was discontinued. There were no legal problems with the form that was developed by regular TQM methods, however there were complaints. Some felt that the time saved with the new form did not justify the additional time and resources involved with purchasing and stocking additional forms, especially when MHS&T is trying to streamline paperwork.

For Your Information

Interesting Web Sites

The Internet continues to expand at a staggering pace. There are sites to interest anyone. Unlike most subjects, coal and mining sites are relatively few in number. Some of the more interesting sites we have found are listed below. Links to most of these will be included on the MHS&T web site in the near future.

One of the most complete sites is www.coalinfo.com, which has links to many additional sites. Another very interesting site is www.yescoal@midwest.net, which showcases the National Coal Museum located in West Frankfort, IL. For government sites, there are www.msha.gov, (MSHA's homepage). Also, www.osmre.gov (Office of Surface Mining homepage) and www.cdc.gov/niosh (National Institute of Occupational Health and Safety) which took over some of the old U.S. Bureau of Mines functions. In West Virginia besides our homepage, www.state.wv.us/mhst, there is the WV Geological Survey page, www.wvgs.wvnet.edu, and DEP's page, www.192.243.139.248. We will continue to provide you periodically with interesting web sites. If you have sites you would like to share, please contact us.

Did You Know?

Coal Mine Safety and Technical Review Committee

The coal mine safety and technical review committee, commonly referred to as the TRC, consists of

two members who shall be residents of this state. The governor appoints one member to represent the viewpoint of the coal operators of this state and one member to represent the viewpoint of the working miners. Presently, Chris Hamilton represents the coal operators and Fred Tucker represents the working miners. Members are appointed to serve a term of three years. The purposes of this committee are to assist the Board of Coal Mine Health and Safety in the development of technical data relating to mine safety issues, including related mining technology. The committee provides suggestions and technical data to the board and proposes rules with general mining industry application. It accepts and considers petitions submitted by individual mine operators or miners seeking site-specific rules pertaining to individual mines. It makes recommendations to the board concerning such rule making activities and provides a forum for the resolution of technical issues encountered by the board. The committee meets at least once during each calendar month, or more often as may be necessary. A quorum of the committee requires both members, and the committee may only act officially by a quorum. Upon receipt of a unanimous recommendation for rule making from the committee, the board may adopt or reject such rule, without modification except as approved by the committee. However, any adopted rule shall not reduce or compromise the level of safety or protection below the level afforded by applicable statutes and rules.

Up Close and Personal

Leisure Time

Eugene White of the Danville office spends his leisure time collecting mine stickers and coins. Eugene attends his children's sporting events and enjoys making small woodcrafts. A unique thing about his woodcrafts is that he uses

no patterns, but instead uses his imagination and scrap pieces of wood that he collects at building projects. He rarely makes the same item twice. Dwight McClure of the Welch office spends his leisure time outdoors. He enjoys squirrel, deer, and turkey hunting and fishing for anything that will bite a hook. Dwight also enjoys quality time with his family, participates at his children's schools and coaches midget league football. James Whetsell of the Fairmont office is just back from a visit to Mexico and Central America. Jim enjoys church and evangelism activities, bicycle riding, swimming, and just being outdoors. Robert Cozart of the Oak Hill office spends summer months with his wife and grandson camping and fishing at Whitiker Falls of the Elk River near Bergoo, WV. Bob is very active in the Chelyan Nazarene church as a Sunday school teacher and bus driver. He is a born again Christian since 1967. Robert True Jr. of the Buckhannon office lives on a farm at Moatsville, WV. Bob is a big fan of WVU football and basketball, enjoys squirrel and deer hunting, and fishing for trout and bass with his children.

Following our policy of announcing anniversaries on five-year increments, we would like to congratulate Richard A. and Shirley VanHorne on their 35th, 36th, or 37th, year of marriage. Allan wasn't sure!

Reminder!

Please Drive Carefully. The children are:

