



MINER DETAILS



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BRIDGING THE COMMUNICATION GAP

The Directors' Office

Governor Joe Manchin has appointed Ronald L. Wooten as Director of the WV Office of Miners Health, Safety and Training. Mr. Wooten replaces James Dean who in February agreed to serve as acting Director of MHST on a temporary basis.

A 30 – year veteran of the mining industry, Wooten served as Vice President of Safety for Consol Inc. from 1982 to 1998. Most recently, he served as Safety Director of Mt. State Bit Service Inc., an independent explosive contracting company located in Morgantown. In addition, Wooten has served as a mine safety consultant to various companies associated with the mining industry. He previously served as Director of Federal Government Relations for Consolidation Coal Co., and as an Assistant Legislative Counsel, Assistant General Counsel and Senior Counsel for The American Mining Congress. He began his career in the industry with U.S. Steel Corp. in 1972.

Wooten is a 1968 graduate of Emory and Henry College where he earned dual degrees in economics and history, and a 1972 graduate of Memphis State University (Now the University of Memphis) College of Law. He is a past chairman of the Bituminous Coal Operators' Association Safety Committee, Joint Industry/United Mine Workers of America Safety Committee, and American Mining Congress Coal Mine Safety Committee. He also has served on National Mining Association Committee and WV Coal Association Mine Law Committee. Ron makes his home at Bruceton Mills, WV with his wife Cheri. We extend a warm welcome to Ron.

Agency Accomplishments

Technology Update

In the near future, we will be seeing major technology changes within our agency. These updates are based on recommendations made by the WV Office of Technology following a study of our technology needs. In the first phase of a multi-phase project, we will see improvements in our network infrastructure with new T-1 data circuits installed in Welch and Danville. Each office will also receive improved routers and switches. These improvements will allow for a new agency-wide phone system based on Voice over IP technology. The new phone system is planned for later this year or early next year. Another improvement that many employees will see is new desktop PCs in each office. We are planning to replace 51 office PCs, plus replace an additional 44 machines in our certification testing networks. With the installation of these PCs, all of our computers will be using the same operating system and same office software. Networked laser printers will also be installed in each office. Later this year, all of our PC's will be linked to a state-wide domain – or network.

automation of their inspection reporting. In conjunction with this change, we will also evaluate/modify our primary data system.

We believe these technology updates will help with productivity and enhance our ability to serve the citizens of West Virginia.

Diesel Update

More coal companies continue to invest in diesel equipment for underground mines. Currently, the Diesel Commission has approved 164 diesels for use at twenty different coal companies throughout the state. Twenty-four additional machines are “in the pipeline” pending approval at the next commission meeting which is tentatively scheduled for October 11 at Fairmont. Two additional companies, Consolidation Coal and Mammoth Coal, are also making application to use diesels. Consol is requesting eight pieces of diesel track equipment at Robinson Run while Mammoth is requesting 13 diesels at the No. 2 Gas mine. Equipment requested at the No. 2 Gas mine includes track-mounted vehicles, rubber-tired mantrips and a 50-ton tractor for the slope. Most of the machines already in use are mantrips, supply locomotives and tractors, road maintenance vehicles, rockdusters, and fork trucks. No pumps or generators have been introduced although several companies seem interested in obtaining diesel-powered generator power distribution boxes to facilitate moving equipment. Several permissible diesel scoops are in use by a construction company for sinking slopes. Only one coal company, Mettiki, is using a permissible diesel scoop in the face area. Permissible diesel-powered face haulage equipment appears to be too cost prohibitive to

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All of these changes will give us a strong foundation to build upon for the next phase – which is to provide our inspection staff some type of

compete with electric shuttle cars. There are newly built machines arriving at the mines almost daily as eight to ten different manufacturers strive to keep pace with demand for diesels in West Virginia. Approximately 30 inspectors are fully trained to inspect diesels, twenty are certified instructors. Inspectors are finding very few violations and companies seem willing to allocate time and personnel to maintaining their diesel equipment. Operators have found it necessary to allocate approximately 16 man-hours per month per vehicle to keep up with required diesel maintenance.

Upcoming Events

Diesel Commission Meeting

October 11, 2006 in Fairmont

Qualified Diesel Instructor Class

September 19-22 Mining Academy

Board of Coal Mine Health and Safety

TBA (Contact Charleston Office)

Board of Miner Training Education and Certification

September 26, Charleston

Mine Technology Task Force

TBA (Contact Charleston Office)

Note: all meeting dates and locations are subject to change.

Did You Know?

Life Insurance Premiums

As of the September payroll, some employees may notice premium increases for life insurance. The increase is based on your age. For example if you have reached a plateau such as 50 or 55 you will see an increase in your premium.

The World Wide Web

The World Wide Web (www) turned 15 on August 6th, 2006. Take a moment and think of the many ways this innovation has changed your life.

Many people use the terms Internet and World Wide Web (or Web) interchangeably, but in fact they are two separate things. The internet, which is much older, is a huge network of networks. It connects millions of computers together throughout the world. The Web is a way of accessing information over the internet. The web uses a language or protocol called HTTP

to allow communication and shared information by way of the internet. The web also uses browsers such as Internet Explorer or Netscape to allow you to view web pages. The next time you talk about the internet and the web, remember that the web is just a portion of the internet. When you place that on-line order or search that piece of information, give a thought to the fact that this technology is still in its teens!

For Your Information

Communications and Tracking

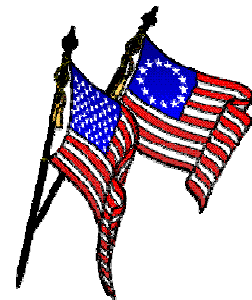
The Mine Safety Technology Task Force is completing its charge to evaluate availability, functional and operational capacity of required communication and tracking devices. The Task Force reviewed multiple products, designs, and approaches and has determined that no single product exists to meet all the requirements of SB-247. However, requirements can be met in most if not all mines by employing separate systems, possibly requiring one for communications and another for tracking. The Task Force has determined that by utilizing multiple products and procedures an integrated communication/tracking system can be installed that would meet the intent of the law "to protect miners in an emergency". The Task Force will meet not less than once per month through June 30, 2007 for the purpose of reviewing progress by manufacturers, regulators, and operators toward achieving the goals set forth in SB-247. Other mine health and safety technology is being reviewed to promote the availability, functional and operational capability necessary for mine safety and health. The Task Force will submit a report to the Director of the findings and recommendations. No later than August 31, 2007, all underground mine operators shall submit a communication/tracking plan for approval by the Director. The design, development, submission, and implementation of the communication/tracking plan shall be the responsibility of the operator of each mine.

Email

Consider this fact the next time you send or read your electronic mail: 35 BILLION emails are sent every DAY, and about 70% of those are spam (garbage). The impact on individual and corporate inboxes is staggering.

Up Close and Personal

We take this time to say good-bye and best wishes to **John Spatafore** and **Kevin Cline**. John has retired and went to work for WVU Mine Extension Service and Kevin has returned to the industry. We would like to welcome **Ericka Belcher**, **Joyce Buckalew** and **Amber Dingess**. Ericka and Joyce are working in the Charleston office, Ericka is working the reception desk and Joyce is filling in for **Barb Hunter** while she is on sick leave (get well Barb!). Amber is filling in for **Sandy Ray** in the Danville office while Sandy is in the process of retiring. Congratulations to **Tina Estep Bowles** for recently winning a \$100 gasoline certificate from the We Save Program.



September 11th – 5 years.



Bounty of Fall!

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

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Visit the agency's website at:

www.wvminesafety.org

