

News Release



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Mine rescuers to test their skills in MSHA simulated mine emergency *More than 30 U.S teams, 10 international teams to participate in competition*

RENO, Nev. – In the event of a mine fire, roof collapse or explosion, mine rescue teams may be tapped to search for colleagues disoriented by toxic gas, trapped beneath layers of rock or severely injured. The teams undergo rigorous training to develop skills that oftentimes save lives. Those skills will be put to the test July 15 through 17 at the 2008 Metal/Nonmetal National and International Mine Rescue Contest at the Reno-Sparks Convention Center. The contest is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) and will feature more than 30 teams from 14 states, as well as 11 teams representing seven countries.

“Mine rescue teams are the backbone of emergency response in the mining industry,” said Richard E. Stickler, acting assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health. “This contest is not just about winning. It’s about being prepared for a real-life disaster and perhaps saving lives in the process.

“These professionals, who spend countless hours training and preparing for a mine emergency, deserve our utmost respect and gratitude,” added Stickler, himself a former mine rescue team captain.

The contest consists of several events. In the “field” competition, teams must solve a hypothetical mine emergency problem while judges rate them on how well they adhere to mine rescue procedures and how quickly they complete specific tasks. In the first aid contest, emergency medical technicians tackle real-life scenarios. In the “benchman” and gas contests, individuals who maintain rescue equipment must thoroughly inspect breathing devices and gas instruments, and quickly correct all defects.

At the conclusion of the three-day event, an awards banquet will take place Thursday evening at the Silver Legacy Resort Casino in Reno.

Teams competing in the national contest represent mining operations located in Alaska, Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Texas and Wyoming. Teams participating in the international contest are based in Australia, Canada, India, Mexico, Peru, Poland and Ukraine.

For a complete list of competing mine rescue teams, photographs and contest winners, go to www.msha.gov.

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