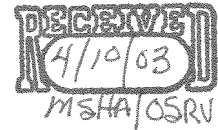


APRIL 10, 2003



I AM RANDY BEDILION , SAFETY COMMITTEEMAN AT RAG CUMBERLAND MINE, AND A MEMBER OF LOCAL 2300 OF THE UNITED MINE WORKERS OF AMERICA THANK YOU FOR GIVING ME THIS OPPORTUNITY. WHAT I AM ABOUT TO INFORM YOU IS SOME OF, BUT NOT ALL OF THE PROBLEMS WE HAVE AT CUMBERLAND MINE. I DO NOT WANT TO EMPHASIZE FLAMABILITY IN A COAL MINE. I THINK WE ALL SHOULD BE ACKNOWLEDGED ENOUGH IF WE ARE IN THIS MEETING TO ALREADY BE AWARE OF THIS. AT CUMBERLAND MINE, WE HAVE HAD NUMEROUS FIRES ON OUR BELTLINES. WE DO NOT FEEL THAT PUSHING A POTENTIAL HAZARD AT US (THE MINERS) IS THE ANSWER. ONE OF MY QUESTIONS TO YOU IS, WHY PUSH A HAZARD TO THE MINERS? ONE OF OUR GREATEST HAZARDS IN A COAL MINE IS A BELT FIRE. WHY PUSH IT TO US FASTER? AT OUR MINE WE HAVE HAD NUMEROUS BELT FIRES. LUCKILY WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GET TO THEM IN A TIMELY MATTER TO PREVENT UNKNOWN DAMAGE. I **ALSO** FEEL THAT NO MATTER WHAT SAFETY PRECAUTIONS THAT ARE INSTITUTED THE RISK FACTOR IS STILL TOO HIGH TO TAKE THIS CHANCE. ANOTHER POINT TO BE TAKEN IS THAT OUR MINE IS VERY GASEOUS. I FEEL THIS ANOTHER RISK TO THE MINERS IN THAT NOT ONLY COULD IT PUSH A FIRE TO US MORE QUICKLY, NOW IT IS ALSO BRINGING ADDITIONAL METHANE TO THE MINERS. THESE ARE SOME OF THE REASONS THE **USE** OF ANY VELOCITY TO VENTILATE WORKING PLACES CREATES UNSAFE AND UNHEALTHY SITUATIONS. AT OUR **MINE**. THE ISOLATION OF OUR BELTS GIVES THE **MINERS** ANOTHER VERY VALUABLE ASSET. THIS IS ANOTHER MEANS OF EGRESS IN THE CASE OF EVACUATING IN THE EVENT OF EMERGENCY. I DON'T FEEL THAT REDUCING COST AND JEAPORDIZING SAFETY IS A FAIR TRADE. IT IS OUR POSITION THAT INTAKE ESCAPEWAYS BE KEPT AS FREE AS POSSIBLE OF POTENTIAL FIRE SOURCES

AT OUR MINE WE HAVE THE CONSPEC SYSTEM IN PLACE. ALL BELTS ARE MONITORED WITH IT'S CO MONITORS. WE BELIEVE THAT THE BELT ENTRIES SHOULD NEVER BE COMMON WITH ENTRIES USED FOR FACE VENTILATION OR THE INTAKE ESCAPEWAYS. THE BELT ENTRY VENTILATION REVIEW REPORT CONTAINS NOTHING MORE TODAY THAT WOULD CONVINCHE THE UMWA TO SUPPORT IT'S VALIDITY TODAY THAN IT DID IN 1989 WHEN IT WAS WRITTEN. A BELT AIR ADVISORY COMMITTEE SHOULD BE INVESTIGATING THE HAZARDS OF INCREASED BELT AIR TO THE WORKING FACES. FURTHER WE FEEL THEY SHOULD BE RESEARCHING AS TO HOW TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF MINERS.

IN CLOSING I WOULD LIKE TO SAY THAT THE AGENCY NEEDS TO REINFORCE TRAINING. IN YEARS PAST MANY THINGS IN THE MINING INDUSTRY HAS CHANGED BUT, THE TRAINING IS STILL MINIMAL, JUST ENOUGH TO PACIFY THE LAW AND STAY IN COMPLIANCE. WE FEEL THE AGENCY NEEDS TO RAISE THEIR STANDARDS TO HELP INSURE GREATER HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARDS FOR THE MINERS.

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Randy Bedilion
U.M.W.A