

Department of Labor • Mine Safety and Health Administration • Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association

BULLETIN

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2006



Contents

Inside

MSHA Kicks Off “Winter Alert” Campaign	3
Surface Mine Rescue Contest	5
Something to Tell Your Grandkids About	6
A 32 -Year Barge Veteran Walks Away	8
What Difference Does Age Make? Part 2: Coal Mining Injuries	10
Miner X-Ray Van; A New Tool for Early Detection and Prevention of Black Lung Disease	19
Dick Buchsieb Receives Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association Award	22
NIOSH Announces Improved Mining Safety and Health Website	24
Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association Texas State Council Meeting Gives Out Educational Awards	25
Photo Gallery	26

The Department of Labor, Mine Safety and Health Administration and Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association Bulletin contains safety articles on a variety of subjects: fatal accident abstracts, studies, posters, and other health and safety-related topics. This information is provided free of charge and is designed to assist in presentations of groups of mine and plant workers during on-the-job safety meetings. For more information, visit the MSHA Home Page at www.msha.gov.

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MSHA Kicks Off “Winter Alert” Campaign

The U.S. Department of Labor’s Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), through its winter alert program, warns U.S. mine operators and miners at underground coal mines of workplace hazards that can arise when the weather turns colder. MSHA records indicate that, historically, most explosions in underground coal mines occur during winter months.

“The changes in weather can increase the risk of fatal accidents,” says David G. Dye, Acting Assistant Secretary of Labor for Mine Safety and Health. “Each miner and mine operator must take individual responsibility to eliminate the kinds of hazards that can cause fatal accidents in the workplace. Safety is not the other guy’s job—safety begins with you.”

In fact, MSHA’s slogan for this year’s campaign is “Winter Alert Starts Now and Safety Begins with YOU.” This message reminds miners and mine operators of the risks of colder weather and educates them about helping to reduce risks and hazards.

“Safety requires the joint effort of both management and labor,” Dye says. “Everyone at the mine site must see safety as an individual value and act to ensure a safe working environment.”

(See next page)

During winter, low barometric pressure and humidity, coupled with the seasonal drying of many areas in coal mines, have contributed to conditions conducive to coal-mine explosions. Drier air allows for the suspension of coal dust in the atmosphere, increasing the chance of an explosion. Low pressure allows methane to move more easily into active areas, where it can possibly ignite. Additionally, limited visibility during inclement weather, icy mine access roads and haul roads, slippery walkways, and the freezing and thawing process on highwalls contribute to hazardous conditions that should be addressed during winter months.

Mine operators are encouraged to conduct frequent mine examinations, provide adequate ventilation of underground areas, apply liberal amounts of rockdust, and frequently check for methane gas buildup at their work site.

Agency personnel are visiting mine sites and speaking to miners and mine operators about the winter alert hazards. Throughout the winter, MSHA mine inspectors will hand out stickers, posters and decals that warn miners and operators of the unique dangers brought on by colder weather. ■

More information on mine safety and health can be viewed on the Internet at www.msha.gov.



Surface Mine Rescue Contest

By Don Gibson

Sponsored by the Powder River Basin Safety Association and the Thunder Basin Coal Company, the 25th Annual International Surface Mine Rescue Competition took place in Gillette, Wyoming, on August 19-20.

Eleven teams, each consisting of seven members, participated in the competition. These teams came from coal and metal mines in Wyoming, Nevada, and Arizona. Observers from Canada also attended.

The competition included a day of mine rescue and EMT skills demonstrations with eight stations dealing with triage, emergency childbirth, fire fighting, airway/oxygen concerns, vehicle accident, aerial rescue/pick-off on the fire tower, and a written test.

The field problem, on the second day of the competition, involved rescue of a victim from a drill mast approximately 30 feet above ground, and treatment of victims on the ground.

An actual drill rig from a local mine was used. Rescuers had to climb the mast safely, treat the victim (a real person), and rig and lower the victim to the ground.

Participants also had to deal with complications from the driller on the



ground who caused the accident, and from the drill supervisor who arrived on the site and interfered with the rescue activities.

MSHA's Western MEO van, stationed in Price, Utah, was brought to Gillette for the contest, and it served as the command and control center for the contest. Personnel from the National Mine Health and Safety Academy videotaped and photographed the events, and prepared a program for the awards banquet. Other personnel from MSHA's Educational Field Services group (EFS) also assisted. ■





Something to Tell Your Grandchildren About

By Theresa Garrard

Watching the clock on New Year's Eve is not an unusual occurrence, but for Plant Manager Harlan Archer, watching the clock count down Dec. 31, 2004, posed a significant milestone. Following a phone call to the plant, at 12:04 a.m. Jan. 1, 2005, Archer sent an e-mail to all employees announcing that the plant had completed one whole calendar year without an MSHA recordable incident.

When J.M. Huber Corporation purchased the Sandersville, Ga., operations in 1999, they were not quite sure of the quality of their most recent purchase. The plant's safety record was certainly less than desirable. However, employees were determined to show their new owners that they were knowledgeable about their jobs, committed to improvement, and that they could compete successfully with other kaolin companies in making high demand products.

In 1999 the plant had nine recordable incidents. Decreasing to four incidents in 2000 and even lower to two incidents in 2001, it didn't take long for the plant to gain the respect of its new owners and to



show competitors that they could make quality products in a safe environment.

Huber's commitment to safety is evident to everyone that enters its gates. Safety banners, safety hard hat stickers, and daily safety meetings are constant reminders that the plant truly desires that all employees returns safely to their families at the end of their work day.

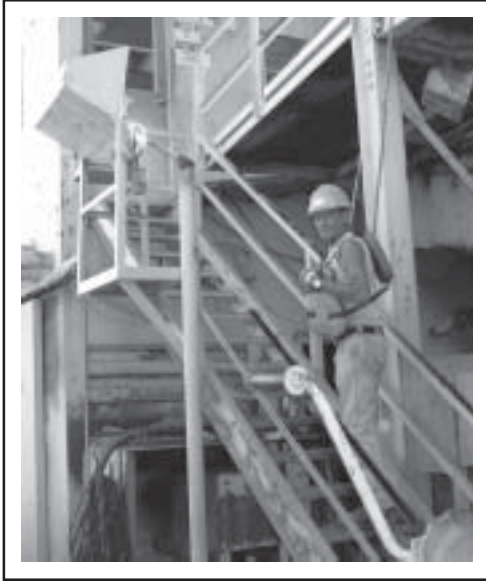
By mid 2nd quarter, all Sandersville employees will have completed STOP training. STOP, which stands for Safety Training Observation Program, represents the safety principles that have guided the DuPont Corporation in becoming a benchmark in safety performance. Other safety initiatives include a goal to become STAR certified (Safety Through Action and Responsibilities) by the end of 2006. STAR is Huber's safety mark of excellence and provides the opportunity for employees to be recognized for safe behavior and encourages constant safety awareness.

In October 2004, when Archer realized that the plant had the potential to complete one full year without an MSHA reportable incident, a local vendor was contacted about supplying Carhartt

jackets for all employees. Through the next couple of months, employees were custom fitted for either a jacket or coat of their choosing. Even the vendor joked that he was so eager to gain this order that he would stand at the plant's entrance in the mornings and evenings wishing employees a safe work day.

Confident the plant would accomplish its calendar year goal, on Dec. 31, an order was finalized for over 175 jackets and given to the vendor with instructions to hold the order until the "all clear" was given on January 1, the vendor received the "ok" and the order was placed. With sizes ranging from small-petite" to "extra-large-tall," the jackets are as diverse as the employees that work at the Sandersville Plant. "We like to think we come in all sizes to fill most orders," says five-foot tall buyer Claudette Brown.

On Feb. 2, plant employees, local news media, Huber dignitaries, and MSHA personnel gathered to celebrate the plant's accomplishment. "When we retire, we will not be able to say that we worked at the largest kaolin facility because we are not; but as we continue to excel in safety performance, we may very well be able to say that we worked at the safest kaolin facility. . . . now that's something worth telling your grandchildren about," said plant manager Harlan Archer, in addressing Carhartt jacketed employees. Archer also took the opportunity to roll out the plant's next significant goal to reach 1 million man hours without a recordable incident by mid-2006. ■



32-Year Barge Veteran Walks Away from Job With Spotless Safety Record

By Amy Louviere

“I needed a job and there was an opening,” says Terry Kemp in a quiet and unassuming manner. Yet there’s nothing unassuming about the 53-year-old welder and barge repairman’s job performance. Since 1973, Kemp has worked at Nugent Sand Company, one of the largest producers of construction aggregates in the Ohio River Valley. Based in Louisville, Ky., Nugent distributes sand and gravel by barge and truck to locations throughout the state, in addition to sites in West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Ohio.

When Kemp walked away from the Bethlehem, In., dredging operation for the last time in

August, he took with him a work history envied by many and rivaled by few. In 32 years, Kemp has never experienced an on-the-job accident or injury. A noteworthy accomplishment for any worker, but especially in dredging and barge repair, where the hazards are many and mistakes can prove costly.

“In this job, you’ve got to be on top of your game every day,” says Steve Brierly, Kemp’s boss and safety director at Nugent for the past nine years. “Winches can get stuck and snap a cable. If a barge isn’t loaded properly, it can sink.”

Kemp, who has seen his share of smashed fingers, metal cuts and burns, agrees. “Paying attention to what’s going on around you, and always anticipating the next move – that’s what’s important,” he says.

Kemp admits there were times when it might have seemed easier to compromise on safety in the name of finishing the job. “Consider those cumbersome life jackets,” says Kemp. “It’s hard to tie yourself to a harness when you’re wearing a life jacket. It can kind of inhibit you from completing the task at hand.”

Yet he continued to play by the rules, and his attention to detail rarely went unnoticed. “Terry has always used good judgment,” notes Brierly. “Every time I’ve watched him, I’ve never had to ask him to behave safely and wisely. He’s always been a safety-conscious worker.”

Weather plays a factor, too, in job performance. “You’ve got to realize these guys are sitting on a floating sand plant,” says Carl Javins, Nugent’s director of river operations. “We don’t shut down if we have a tornado, ice and snow, or a rainstorm. There’s a lot of exposure to some harsh elements out there.”

And then there are the long hours. “When you consider the number of years Terry’s been here, and all the overtime he has worked, it’s an

extraordinary feat that he's accomplished," marvels Mike Wedding, Nugent's vice president of operations. Kemp's safety record made him eligible for Holmes' Professional Miner program, which he joined last year.

Kemp's longevity, experience and company loyalty will indeed be missed. "Deep down I hate to see him leave. We've been co-workers and friends for so long," says Javins. "It will be hard to find another Terry."

"He's been a wonderful role model, and the other workers certainly learned a lot from him," added Brierly.

While Kemp's legacy will be hard to top, Nugent is doing its part to instill a strong safety ethic within its employees. The company conducts weekly and quarterly safety meetings, along with annual refresher course training.

Working collegially with MSHA is important to Nugent as well. "Over the last 30 years, a lot has changed in the industry," says Brierly. "We've always strived to keep up with the safety laws and regulations. MSHA inspectors have been very helpful about coming out on courtesy inspections, especially before we've started up a new operation."

The relationship between operator and government was not without some growing pains, however. "When MSHA first started coming in, it was all kind of new to us," admits Javins. "I finally developed the attitude that I had to appreciate someone showing me something that would make it safer for me and my workers." ■



What Difference Does Age Make?

Part 2: Coal Mining Injuries

Launa Mallett and Diana J. Schwerha
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According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2002 the coal mine workforce had a higher median age (45.2 years) than the workforces in any other sector of mining. The difference was even larger between coal mine workers and all employed persons in the U.S., where the median age was 40.1 years. Chart 1 shows the number of coal mine workers in selected age groups in 2002. Forty-eight thousand miners, 57 percent of the workforce, were over 44 years old. When looking at the ten-year age groups, one would expect the percentage of workers in each group to be equal if workers were entering and leaving the industry in a consistent way. Instead, the 45-54 age group, at 44 percent of the total, makes up a substantially larger percentage of the workforce than either the 35-44 age group (23.8%) or the 25-34 group (14.3%).

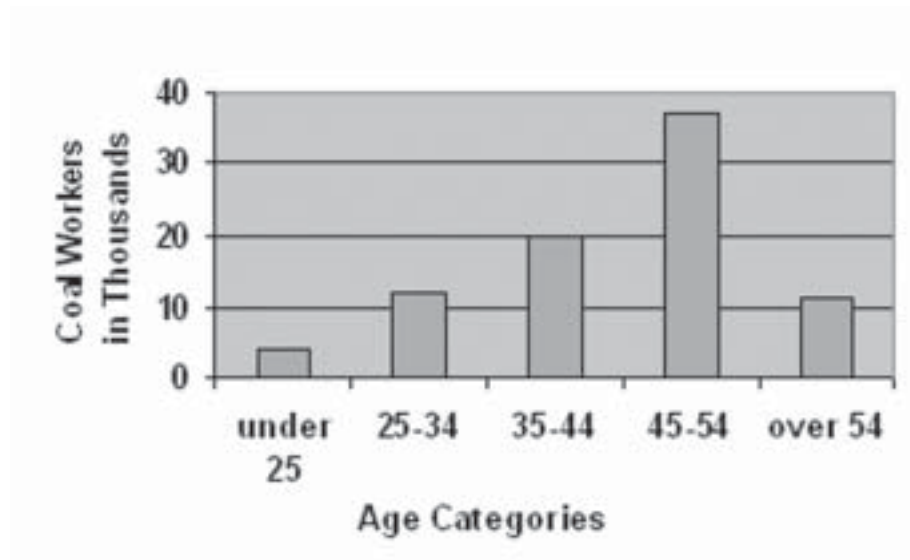


Chart 1: Number of Coal Mine Workers
(Source BLS Current Population Survey 2002)

We see similar trends when we look at injuries reported to the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA). Bituminous coal mine operators reported 5,137 injuries in 2002. The median age for injured underground coal miners was 43 years. It was 44 years for surface miners, and 47 years for preparation plant workers. When divided into age categories, the largest groups were the 45 to 54 year olds. See Charts 2a through 2c.

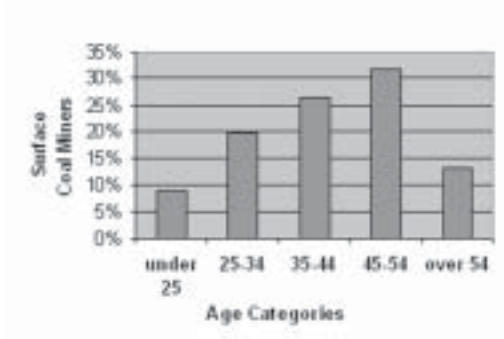


Chart 2a: Percent of Injured Underground Coal Miners (Source MSHA 2002)

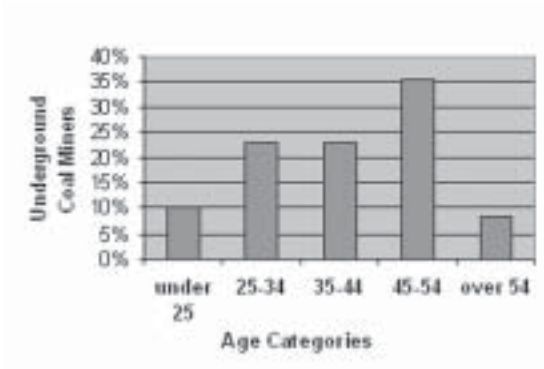


Chart 2b: Percent of Injured Surface Coal Miners (Source MSHA 2002)

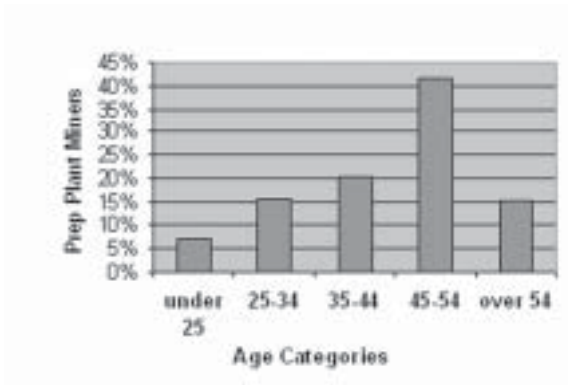


Chart 2c: Percent of Injured Preparation Plant Workers (Source MSHA 2002)

(See next page)

Many of the miners in the older age categories are part of the generational group known as the Baby Boomers. A lot has been written in the academic and popular press about how Baby Boomers compare with groups who are older and younger. Looking at these groups is another way to explore the mining injury data. While there are different ways that people categorize the generational groups, they are all fairly similar. One strategy identifies the groups as 1) Veterans, aged 60 and above, 2) Baby Boomers, from 42 to 59 years old, 3) Generation Xers, 22 to 41 years old, and 4) Nexters, younger than 22 years old (Zemke et al., 2000). Table 1 shows the coal injury data broken into these generational categories. We can do further breakdowns to explore differences in injured miners by generational group.

Location	Nexters	Xers	Boomers	Veterans
Underground (n=3453)	2.5	43.1	52.9	1.4
Surface (n=912)	2.3	41.8	51.0	4.9
Prep Plant (n=398)	1.8	30.9	62.3	5.0

*Table 1: Percent of Injured Miners in Generational Categories
(Source MSHA 2002)*

Job title at the time of injury is one area where age seems to matter. Table 2 shows that some underground coal job categories are found in all age groups, for example “laborer/utility man/bull gang.” Others are only represented in some groups. “Mechanic/repairman/helper” is found only in the older Boomer and Veteran groups. Surface coal operations reported 19% of the injured Nexters in the job category of “oiler/greaser,” but less than 10% of any of the other age groups. On the other hand, Nexters were the only surface mine group that did not have at least 10% of the injuries listed under “bulldozer/tractor operator.” The numbers of preparation plant workers in the various age categories are low, especially the Nexters. But it is interesting to note that over 10% of the injured Veterans are listed in the category “Electrician/helper/wireman.” This category is not seen in any of the other groups.

Group	Job Title	Percent of Group*
Nexters (n=87)	Laborer/utility man/bull gang	32.2
	Roof bolter	29.9
	Belt/conveyor man/crew	13.8
Xers (n=1489)	Roof bolter	26.6
	Laborer/utility man/bull gang	23.4
Boomers (n=1828)	Laborer/utility man/bull gang	20.2
	Roof bolter	16.3
	Mechanic/repairman/helper	11.9
Veterans (n=49)	Laborer/utilityman/bull gang	16.3
	Belt/conveyor man/crew	14.3
	Electrician/helper/wireman	14.3
	Mechanic/repairman/helper	12.2

Table 2: Common Job Titles of Injured Underground Miners by Generational Group

**Only categories accounting for 10% or more of group total are listed.*

(Source MSHA 2002)

(See next page)

Examining MSHA’s accident class data reveals differences in the injury experiences of the generational groups. Table 3 shows the top accident classes for each generational group at underground coal mines. The accident class “handtools” is only found in the Nexter group and is predominant at all locations: underground (16.1%), surface (23.8%), and preparation plant (57.1%). Conversely, “slips and falls” account for at least 10% of the injuries in every category except the Nexters. In a similar fashion, at surface operations the accident class “handtools” accounts for over 10% of the Nexter group injuries, but “powered haulage” is found in every category except for Nexters. Across all mining locations, “handling materials” is the only accident class that makes up at least 10% of every generational group. It is interesting to note that the percentage of injuries classified as “handling materials” increases with the age of the generational group in most cases. Only the Veteran group at surface mines differs from that pattern (See Chart 3).

Group	Accident Class	Percent of Group*
Nexters (n=87)	Machinery	33.3
	Handling material	21.8
	Handtools	16.1
Xers (n=1489)	Handling material	33.8
	Machinery	24.8
	Slip or fall of person	10.9
Boomers (n=1828)	Handling material	35.9
	Slip or fall of person	15.8
	Machinery	13.9
	Powered haulage	10.3
Veterans (n=49)	Handling material	40.8
	Machinery	18.4
	Slip or fall of person	16.3

Table 3: Accident Class of Injured Underground Miners by Generational Group
** Only categories accounting for 10% or more of group total are listed. (Source MSHA 2002)*

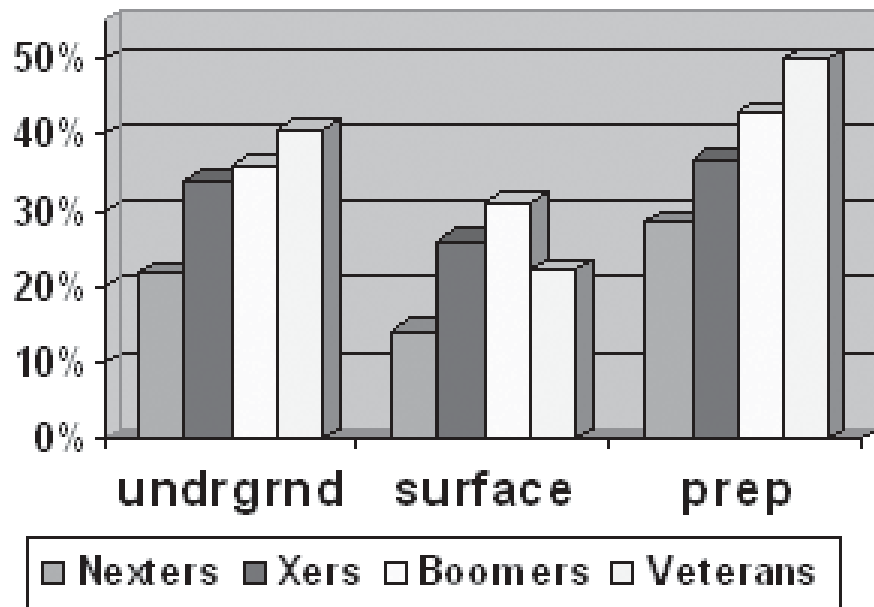


Chart 3: Percentage of Injuries Classified as Handling Materials by Generational Group (Source MSHA 2002)

Experience is a characteristic that is closely tied to age. It makes sense that many of the injured miners in the older generational categories will be more experienced than those in the younger groups. This proves to be true when looking at total mining experience. For example, at underground mining operations over 90% of the injuries in the Boomer and the Veteran groups occurred to miners with 5 or more years of experience but less than 60% of the Xers were that experienced. A more interesting finding, however, is the amount of experience the injured miners had at the mine where they were working at the time of the event. Even in the older generational groups, the percentage of miners with 2 years or less experience at the mine where they were working was considerably larger than the percentage of miners with that level of total mining experience. This trend may suggest that unfamiliarity with the specific mine creates increased risk of injury for all ages of miners. See Charts 4a through 4c.

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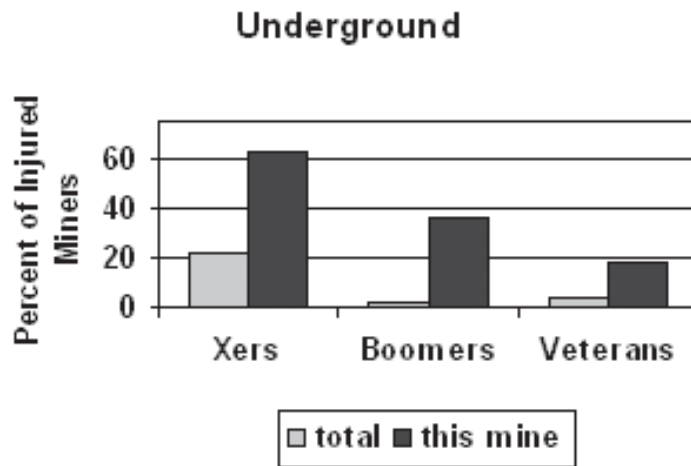


Chart 4a: Percent of Injured Underground Miners with 2 or Less Years Experience by Generational Group (Source MSHA 2002)

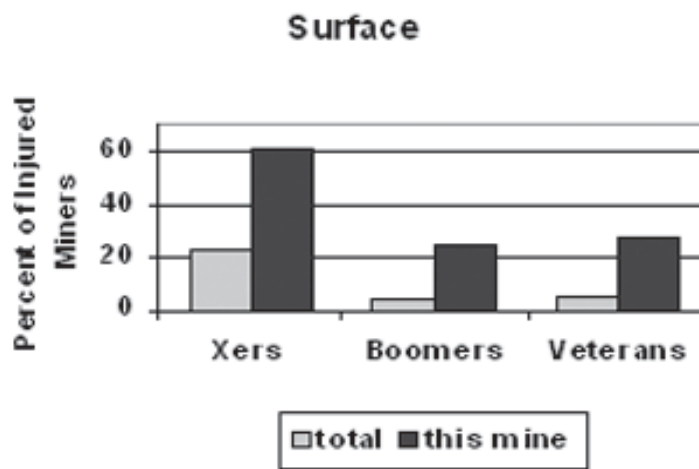


Chart 4b: Percent of Injured Surface Miners with 2 or Less Years Experience by Generational Group (Source MSHA 2002)

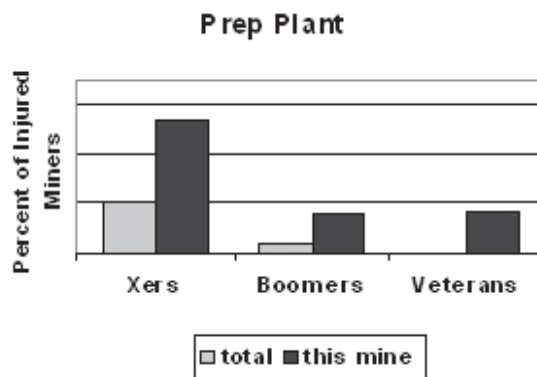


Chart 4c: Percent of Injured Prep Plant Miners with 2 or Less Years Experience by Generational Group (Source MSHA 2002)

Along with the number of injuries occurring, the severity of those injuries is another component required to assess safety. MSHA collects data on the time injuries require each miner to be away from work. Increased days lost indicate a more serious injury. In 2002, the numbers of lost work day injuries reported to MSHA were: 2,534 underground, 586 surface, and 247 preparation plant. As shown in Chart 5, the median days lost generally increased with age of the generational group. The older the miner, the longer it takes to recover from injury.

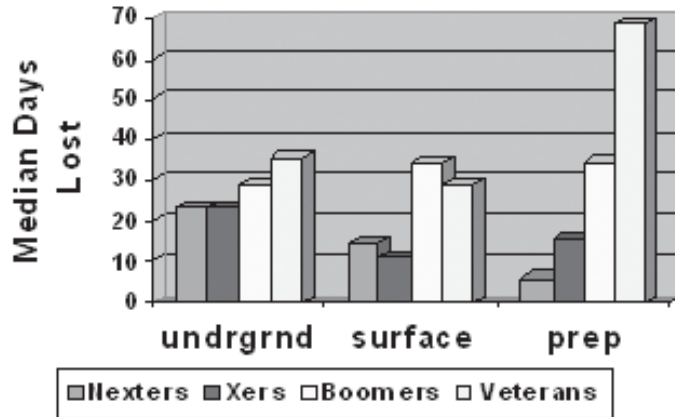


Chart 5: Median Days Lost by Generational Group

* Includes permanent disability, days away from work only, & days away AND restricted activity

NOTE: Days lost due to permanent disability is an assigned number rather than the actual number of days (Source MSHA 2002)

Considerably less than half of the coal miners injured in 2002 were under 40 years old. At preparation plants only 28% were under 40 (See Chart 6). It is likely that these numbers broadly reflect the ages of the workforce. Knowing the age of the workforce allows us to match training, procedures, and policy to worker needs. It is a key component in planning for the workforce of tomorrow.

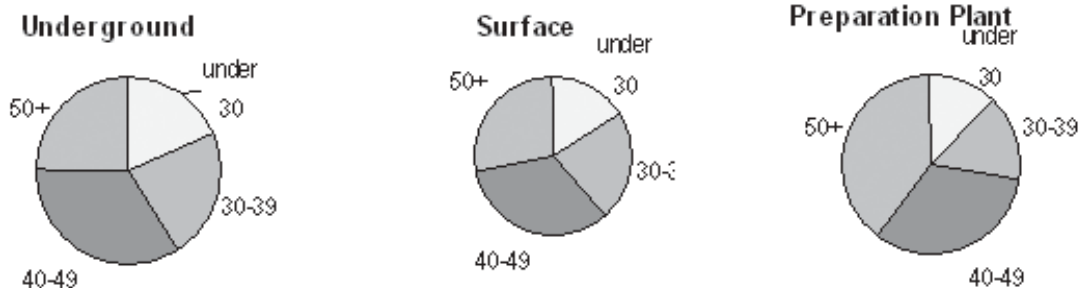


Chart 6: Percent of Injured Miners by Age Categories
(Source MSHA 2002)

(See next page)

There is little doubt that as Baby Boomers move toward retirement there will be changes in the United States workforce. It's likely that the mining industry will see changes too. Now is the time to consider whether or not your mine is undergoing or heading for change and how that change might impact safety and health. ■

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Mine Safety and Health Administration Employment and Accident/Injury/Illness Database 2002.

Zemke, R., C. Raines, and B. Filipczak. [2000]. *Generations at Work: Managing the Clash of Veterans, Boomers, Xers, and Nexters in Your Workplace*. NY: American Management Association.



Miner X-ray Van

A New Tool for Early Detection and Prevention of Black Lung Disease

By P. D. Lindahl, MSHA, Coal Division of Health, Arlington, VA

A new mobile x-ray van will soon be available to provide another avenue for underground coal miners to receive chest x-rays. Working in collaboration with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), MSHA provided funding for the x-ray van and NIOSH paid for the equipment required for x-ray screening. The MSHA Miners' Choice Health Screening previously offered free chest x-rays from 1999 - 2002 to surface and underground coal miners to assess their respiratory health, and a significant percentage of miners participated. Results were used to determine the national and regional prevalence of coal workers' pneumoconiosis (CWP), commonly known as black lung, and raise the awareness of hazards associated with respirable coal and silica dust among miners. However, many coal miners working in regions where the indicated CWP prevalence was high did not receive an approved x-ray. When the x-ray van is delivered, it will be transferred to NIOSH in Morgantown, W.Va., for use in their National Coal Workers' X-ray Surveillance Program (CWXSP). A depiction of the x-ray van is shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1. View of the mobile x-ray van.

(See next page)

The results of two Federal x-ray surveillance programs; NIOSH's CWXSP and MSHA's Miner's Choice Health Screening, clearly indicate that underground and surface coal miners continue to be at risk of developing CWP. And given the lower participation rate in some states, it is possible that many more at-risk coal miners would benefit from an x-ray examination so they can make informed decisions on their health. Therefore, the government, industry and labor should work together to increase surveillance of miners at risk of developing CWP, and the new mobile x-ray van serves as an important tool to achieve this goal.

The mobile x-ray van will be sent primarily to areas where the indicated CWP prevalence among miners is high and in states, regions or counties where miner participation in previous surveillance efforts was low. The information obtained from CWP screening activities with the van will help MSHA and NIOSH identify at-risk occupations, regions and mines and the conditions where improvements in dust controls are needed to minimize dust generation and better protect miners' health.

Miners identified with evidence of the development of CWP may slow or stop its progression by choosing to exercise their rights under 30 CFR Part 90 to work in an area of the mine where the dust concentration in the mine atmosphere would not exceed 1.0 mg/m³. ■

Reference

Pneumoconiosis Prevalence Among Working Coal Miners Examined in Federal Chest Radiograph Surveillance Programs — United States, 1996 – 2002, MMWR Weekly, April 18, 2003 / 52(15), pp. 336-340.



Dick Buchsieb Receives Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association Award

by Jim Myer



The Mid Ohio District Council, Joseph A. Holmes Association presented Dick Buchsieb with a prestigious award at its monthly meeting at Maria Adornetto's Restaurant, Zanesville, Ohio, on October 18, 2005.

This award and a plaque with a lump of coal were presented to Dick for his distinguished service to the Joseph A. Holmes Association, especially the Mid Ohio District Council.

Dick has been in mining for over 51 years. He is an industrial engineer graduate of Ohio State University and is a registered professional engineer in Ohio. He began his career at the Jeffery Manufacturing Company in Columbus, Ohio. Dick, is well known throughout the Ohio and national mining community. He is well known for his knowledge of Ohio mining history, including the use of mine flame safety lights. Dick has always been professional and very courteous in his dealings with the mining community and the public in general. He has indeed been the miner's friend and mentor. These awards are very well deserved and the officers and members are proud to have Dick as a member of this great association. Dick works as a sales account executive for Cantwell Machinery Co., the Volvo Construction Equipment Dealer in central Ohio.

THE WEB



NIOSH Announces Improved Mining Safety and Health Website

The NIOSH Office of Mining and Construction Safety and Health Research has redesigned its Mining Safety and Health website. The updated site incorporates a significant amount of new safety and health information plus an improved layout to better serve customers' needs. It also provides background information about the NIOSH Mining Research Program, including research awards, core competencies, unique laboratories, community and educational outreach, and a brief discussion of how the research program is structured.

The redesigned website features improved search capabilities. The "Search Mining" feature on each page lets one search only the NIOSH Mining Safety and Health website. The user can still search all of NIOSH using the "Search NIOSH" option.

Developers expanded "Safety and Health Topics" and reorganized the site to make it easier to find information. Each topic page now has a significant amount of new and updated information, as well as links to related topics of interest. All topics can be accessed from the home page.

More than 650 mine safety and health publications are now downloadable from the site. Short summaries let the user quickly identify publications of interest.

The updated website offers over 120 NIOSH mine safety and health products, including training exercises, toolbox talks, videos, computer software, guides, and checklists. Many of these are downloadable. If not, instructions explain how to obtain copies.

You can find the new website at www.cdc.gov/niosh/mining. If you have any comments or would like additional information, contact Mike Brnich, CMSP, Health Communications Coordinator, NIOSH Pittsburgh Research Laboratory, Cochran's Mill Road, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15236, phone: (412) 386-6840, fax: (412) 386-6780, Email: MBrnich@cdc.gov

The Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association Texas State Council Meeting Gives Out Educational Awards

The Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association presented a 2005 Holmes Scholarship Award in the amount of \$4000 to Undergraduate student Nathan Allen White of West Texas A&M University. Mr. White is majoring in Technology Engineering.



Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association Scholarship Chair Bob Novello, left, presents the scholarship to Nathan A. White.

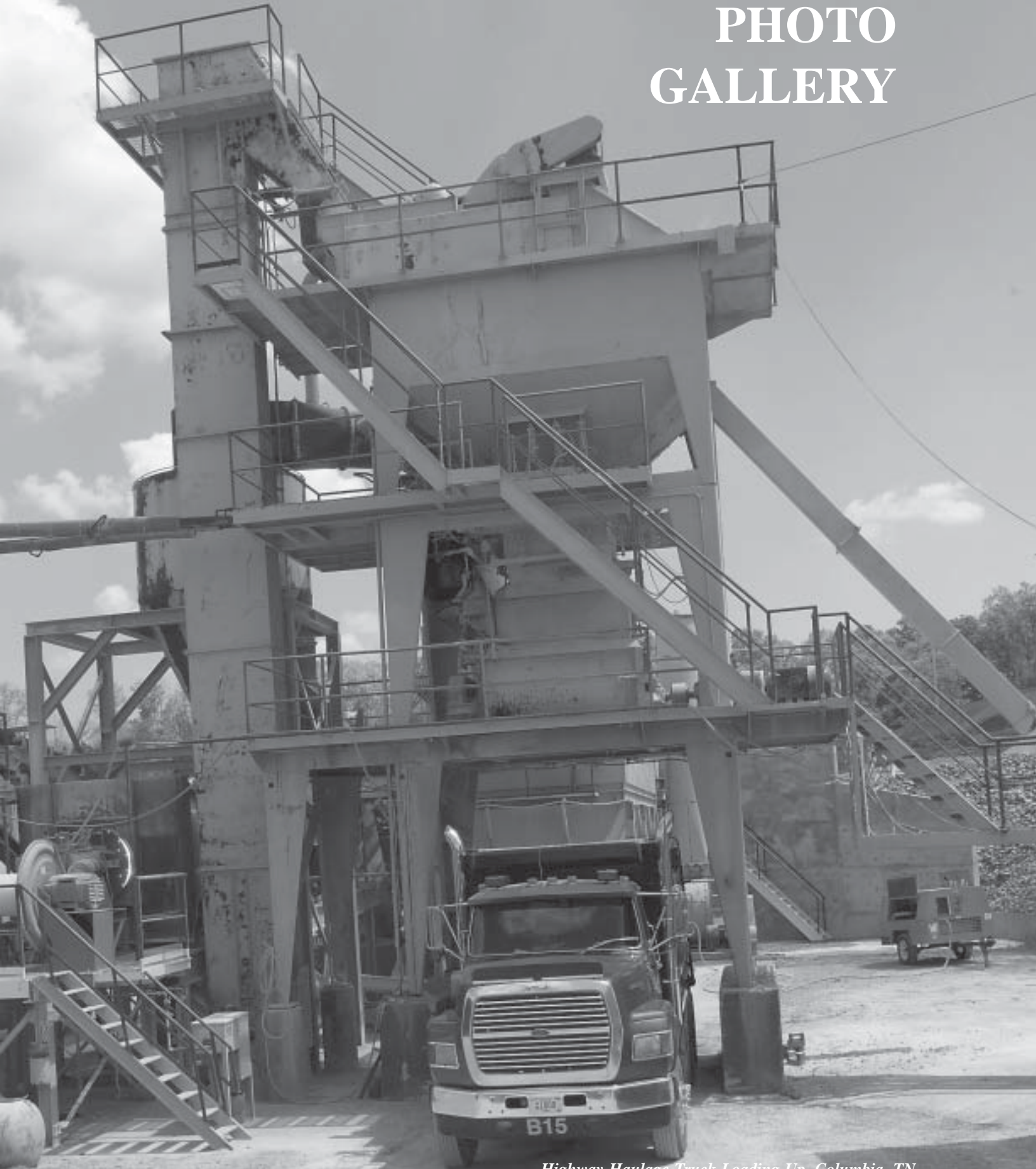


Bob Novello addresses the audience.



Pat Hurley with the Texas State Council Members.

PHOTO GALLERY



Highway Haulage Truck Loading Up, Columbia, TN.

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Beaver, WV 25813-9426
Please call us at 304/256-3264
or Fax us at 304/256-3461
E-mail: hoyle.stephen@dol.gov

Reminder: The District Council Safety Competition for 2006 is underway - please remember that if you are participating this year, you need to mail your quarterly report to:

**Mine Safety & Health Administration
Educational Policy and Development
Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association Bulletin
P.O. Box 9375
Arlington, Virginia 22219**



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