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**VIRGINIA COAL MINE SAFETY BOARD**

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**Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy  
Thursday – May 29, 2003 - 10:00 A.M.**

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## MINUTES

### VIRGINIA COAL MINE SAFETY BOARD

#### MEMBERS PRESENT:

- Fred Luntsford
- Danny Sparks
- Foster Tankersley
- Richard Waddell
- James Hicks
- John Crawford
- Max Kennedy, Jr.

#### MEMBERS ABSENT:

- Robert F. Stallard
- Wayne Thomas

#### OTHERS PRESENT:

- Frank A. Linkous, Chief, Division of Mines
- John Thomas, Division of Mines Inspector Supervisor
- Dawn Franks, Administrative Program Specialist
- Mike Willis, Division of Mines Mine Safety Engineer
- Todd Richardson, OMIS Manager

#### Meeting Called To Order

The Chairman, Fred Luntsford, called the meeting to order. A roll call of members determined there was a quorum present. A quorum requires the Chairman and four members to be present.

**The summary of the April 18, 2002 minutes and the minutes for the October 24, 2002 meeting were approved.** Also, the agenda for the April 10, 2003 meeting was approved. This meeting was postponed until today, May 29, 2003.

## **Status report on review of Board of Coal Mining Examiners' Requirements, and proposed stockpile regulations**

A regulatory brief regarding the review of the Board of Coal Mining Examiners' Requirements, 4 VAC 25-20, and the proposed Regulations Governing Stockpiles, Surgepiles, Bins and Hoppers, 4 VAC 25-125, was discussed during this meeting. The Board of Coal Mining Examiners' Requirements were reviewed and amended by the Coal Mine Safety Board during the first stage of the regulatory promulgation. The Notices of Intended Regulatory Action were published August 12, 2002. There were no comments received during the 30-day public comment period. The regulatory schedule on the proposed regulation packages is listed in the hand-out of the regulatory brief being provided. However, the agency hopes to complete the promulgation about September, 2003. A public hearing will be conducted for comments.

## **Election of Chairman and Co-Chairman**

Election was conducted with a unanimous vote re-electing Fred Luntsford as Chairman, and James Hicks was unanimously elected as Co-Chairman for 2004.

## **Mine Safety Awards 2002**

Nominations for the Mine Safety Awards for 2002, were reviewed and approved by the Board. A handout outlining criteria for the various awards was given to each member. Included in this handout was a list of each mine and employee meeting the criteria with the selected winner for each category. These awards will be presented in the presence of each winner's work group. Anticipated date for awards to be distributed is the end of June, 2003.

## **Overview of Coal Mine Safety Performance Data for Virginia Coal Mining Industry: Year 2002 and first quarter 2003**

Graphs and charts reviewed with the Board by John Thomas, DM Mine Inspector Supervisor:

- Fatalities And Serious Injuries (4 fatalities and 22 serious personal injuries for 2002)
- Serious Personal Injuries (3 personal injuries for first quarter 2003, significantly lower than previous years)
- Coal Mine Lost Time Injury Rates All Reportable VA and Nation
- Coal Mine Lost Time Injury Rates Underground
- Coal Mine Lost Time Injury Rates For Surface Mines (DM is putting emphasis on surface mines in an effort to reduce the 5.65 lost time injury rate)
- Coal Mine Lost Time Injury Rates For Auger Mines
- Coal Mine Lost Time Injury Rates For Prep Plants (Virginia/National Averages based on MSHA figures since Virginia does not license prep plants)
- Number of Violations and Closures (these numbers are down from previous years, DM's goal is to reduce violations)
- Charts On Type of Violations Issued
- Mine Inspector Activities (Additional follow-up spot inspections will increase, due to emphasis being placed on spot inspections for surface mines)

## **Review of Virginia Coal Mines Fatal Accident January 21, 2003**

- Dorchester Enterprises, Inc., Mine #4, January 21, 2003  
A contractor employee working at Dorchester Enterprise, Inc. Mine #4 was electrocuted when he apparently came in contact with a metal trailer and/or steel beams that had most likely become energized from a damaged 440 volt alternating current roof bolting machine trailing cable.

An overview of the problems being discovered regarding willful violations of cables and electrical equipment was discussed. Examples of cables were on display for each member to view.

## **Tri-State Initiative and Virginia participation**

Frank Linkous provided an overview presentation of the recently announced “Tri-State Initiative” intended to focus activities and resources to address safety and health concerns of coal mining in areas of Southern West Virginia, Southwestern Virginia and Eastern Kentucky. Data compiled for the past five years indicate that consistently higher frequency rates of fatal accidents, lost time injuries, and respirable dust and noise exposure non-compliance occur in this region. The Tri-State Initiative will function as a support group between MSHA and the three state agencies. The effort will coordinate to ensure maximum effectiveness in use of state and federal resources.

A review of the key areas of focus as developed during the first meeting of the MSHA and state representatives was presented and included the following:

- Training of mine foremen to achieve more effective control in work environments. Also, focus on improved examinations and hazard recognition.
- Recognizing the risk factors associated with the mobile workforce characteristic in today’s coal industry. Improve newly employed miner training standards and practices.
- Improve safety standards and performance for independent contractors who are an increasing part of industry activities and account for fatal and other injury incidence higher than miner population as a whole.
- Encourage interim compliance at operations between regular inspection cycles. Coordinate state and MSHA inspections.
- Recognize and respond to the increasing fatal injury incidence rates at surface mines, surface plants and other surface facilities.

## **Overview of Virginia mine mapping and information program**

Todd Richardson, OMIS Manager and Mike Willis, DM Mine Safety Engineer presented a demonstration of the new mapping program. The DM mine map search tool provides the DM and DMME staff with the capability to search DMME’s underground mine map descriptions, as well as to download electronic versions of these maps if scanned. DMME is currently in the process of scanning all mine maps into digital form. The current map search tool provides the ability to search based on key criteria such as location description, index numbers, mine name, mine operator, quad and seam name.

The Division of Mineral Resources staff and college intern students are currently analyzing, cataloging, and documenting key features from each underground mine map. These maps are then outlined and placed using location reference data in a GIS layer with

other maps. Seam and depth data are used to correlate the mine location information and then used to place the map layer in 3-D relative to topographic data.

## **Open Agenda**

- Areas of potential issues related to the Coal Mine Safety Laws discussed by Frank Linkous. Frank asked the Board to assist in a review of the laws and address areas that present potential problems.

Areas of potential issues discussed were:

- Mine mapping standards
- Chapter 18 – Impoundment standards
- Electrical code
- Roof control
- Ventilation
- Pre-shift

Some clean-up and areas of potential conflict could be addressed which will make the laws clearer and better for all concerned.

A motion was made and approved to have a package put together of the areas discussed. This should be sent to each Board member for review. A meeting to discuss the package should then be scheduled for sometime in September. The Board will be notified of the date.

- Danny Sparks wanted to publicly thank the State and MSHA for their assistance in the mine fire incident at Buchanan #1. This was handled very efficiently and timely, and he appreciated all the help.
- Max Kennedy wanted to thank Carroll Green and Terry Ratliff for their immediate response in the mine fire incident.

❖ **Next Meeting: To be announced at a later date.**

## **Adjournment**

Upon a motion made and seconded, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn Franks  
Secretary