



#### **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **AMERICAN ENERGY CORPORATION, OHIO VALLEY COAL COMPANY FIRE BRIGADES PARTICIPATE IN LIVE FIRE TRAINING AT NIOSH RESEARCH MINE**

*Specialized training, developed by Murray Energy Corporation exclusively for its fire brigades, allows miners to practice fighting live fires underground*

(Beallsville, Ohio – August 24, 2009) – Mine fire brigades from American Energy Corporation and The Ohio Valley Coal Company recently completed specialized training in mine firefighting during two weeks of exercises at the Safety Research Coal Mine operated by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) near Pittsburgh. American Energy Corporation and The Ohio Valley Coal Company are independent operating subsidiaries of Murray Energy Corporation.

The specialized training, which featured live fires in the mine, was developed by Murray Energy Corporation specifically for members of the company's mine fire brigades.

"We worked very closely with NIOSH to develop a training program in which our teams learn to fight mine fires in a setting that duplicates real-life scenarios far better than above-ground simulations," said Bill Moser, manager of emergency preparedness for Murray Energy Corporation. "Although rare, fires are one of the most dangerous hazards that could occur in a coal mine and we want our fire brigades prepared to respond quickly and safely to help ensure a positive outcome."

(more)

During the training exercises, fire brigade teams were given a map of the NIOSH mine and told there was a fire – it was their job to find and extinguish it. As they worked their way into the dark mine passages, a light haze gave way to thick plumes of smoke that reduced visibility to mere inches. Wearing nearly 60 pounds of firefighting gear and self-contained breathing apparatuses, brigade members encountered a ‘victim’ – who provided additional information about the location of the fire, but also had to be safely evacuated before the team could return. When finally encountering the blaze – a propane-fueled fire controlled by NIOSH staff – the brigades deployed fire hoses, making sure to keep the nozzles spraying a wide ‘fog’ until the fire was extinguished.

Mine fire brigades are a highly specialized aspect of Murray Energy Corporation’s robust safety program. While emergency mine rescue teams are required by federal regulations – though Murray Energy employed such teams long before they were mandated – there is no requirement for mine operators to have fire brigades. Because municipal fire departments are not trained in fighting mine fires, Moser says well-trained mine fire brigades are a critical component of mine fire safety and emergency preparedness.

“It takes time and money and training to get a fire brigade program up and running – and then ongoing training to make sure the teams stay sharp,” he said. “But, this is an investment in safety – an expert fire brigade can save lives and can save the mine itself.”

In addition to trainings at the NIOSH facility, Murray Energy fire brigades have undergone specialized mine firefighting training at West Virginia University’s Mining Extension Service, as well as the National Mine Health and Safety Academy operated by the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) in Beckley, West Virginia.

Duty on the mine fire brigades is voluntary and miners who volunteer participate in rigorous trainings in addition to their regular jobs at the mine. Fire brigade members cite a desire to ensure mine safety and protect their livelihoods and fellow miners (who also are often friends and family members) as primary reasons for volunteering to be a member of their mine’s fire brigade.

Miner Bob Bailey, who has been a member of the American Energy Corporation’s Century Mine fire brigade for nine years, says he became involved in the fire brigade in an effort to learn more about mine safety.

“Things can change very quickly underground – a fire will double in size every five minutes,” said Bailey, who notes that he never worked at a mine that had a fire brigade until he came to work for a mine owned by Murray Energy Corporation. “I want to be able to help if there is a fire – to save the lives of the people I work with, to be able to save the mine.”

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At the ready: Members of the American Energy Corporation’s Century Mine fire brigade prepare to enter the NIOSH Safety Research Coal Mine near Pittsburgh for specialized mine fire fighting training involving live fire underground. The miners are one of eight teams of volunteer fire brigade members from Murray Energy Corporation subsidiaries American Energy Corporation and The Ohio Valley Coal Company that participated in the training.



In the thick of it: As smoke begins to reduce visibility and requires the use of self-contained breathing apparatuses, a member of the American Energy Corporation's Century Mine fire brigade gives instructions during a specialized mine fire fighting training at the NIOSH Safety Research Coal Mine outside of Pittsburgh. Eight teams of volunteer fire brigade members from Murray Energy Corporation subsidiaries American Energy Corporation and The Ohio Valley Coal Company participated in the live fire trainings.