



NEWS RELEASE

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AMERICAN COAL COMPANY MINE RESCUE TEAM RECEIVES HIGH MARKS IN MINE RESCUE DRILL

Veteran rescue team demonstrates that coordination and communication are keys to successful mine rescue operations

(Galatia, IL – May 4, 2009) The highly-decorated mine rescue team from The American Coal Company recently participated in a mine rescue disaster drill at the Patikki Mine outside of Carmi. The American Coal Company rescue team was one of only three teams invited to participate in the Mine Emergency Response Development (MERD) exercise sponsored by the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) District 8 office and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

During the exercise, mine rescue team members from The American Coal Company's New Future Mine and New Era Mine worked in concert with their managers who operated in a simulated command center. After being given a scenario in which miners were trapped in a mine, managers directed the rescue team via two-way radio and made subsequent decisions based on information rescue team members communicated from the simulated mine set up for the exercise.

“One of the main objectives of this exercise was to see how well managers in the command center and rescue team members in the mine communicated and coordinated operations to rescue the “trapped” miners,” said Joe Myers, American Coal Company rescue team captain, who has been involved with mine rescue operations for 25 years. “During a real rescue operation, we are constantly evaluating conditions in the mine and communicating that information to the command center. Working together, we want to make the best decisions to protect the safety of the rescue team while locating and rescuing those who are unable to get out.”

Those in the command center were also challenged with numerous simulated distractions – including inquisitive reporters, concerned family members, and the presence of regulatory personnel – all intended to replicate the chaotic conditions that can further complicate an emergency. Likewise, when the rescue team successfully located a “trapped” miner in a simulated low-oxygen environment, managers directed the team to construct ventilation controls – as would occur in an actual rescue – to increase the likelihood of survival and a successful evacuation.

“The American Coal Company rescue team is one of the best, if not the best, in the country; they are highly-skilled,” said Rob Murray, vice president of business development and external affairs for Murray Energy Corporation, parent company of The American Coal Company. “This is an all-volunteer rescue team and the men take this work very seriously. In an emergency, when people are evacuating the mine, these men are going into it – and they wear that as a badge of honor.”

“We have rescue teams at all of our mines because emergency response is a critical part of the ensuring the safety and well being of our miners,” Murray added.

Following the approximately two-and-a-half hour exercise, members of The American Coal Company rescue team and their managers met with federal and state mine regulators for a debriefing that included feedback on the team’s and managers’ performance. Myers said his rescue team and managers received only positive comments from mine regulators, as well as from the two other mine rescue teams who participated in the exercise earlier and had observed their performance.

“The comments we heard from MSHA, the state and the other teams about our performance were all positive,” he said. “We have a very good rescue team, and this was an excellent opportunity to demonstrate our capabilities while keeping our skills sharp.”

In addition to team captain Myers, American Coal Company mine rescue team members who participated in the MERD exercise included Marcus Tso, Bill Agin, Mike Smith, Scott Webb and Ross Stanley.

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