



News Release

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National Mine Rescue Contest Readies Teams for Possible Disasters

RENO, Nev. – In the event of a mine fire, roof collapse or explosion, mine rescue teams may be tapped to search for colleagues disoriented by toxic gas, trapped beneath layers of rock or severely injured.

The teams undergo rigorous training to develop skills that oftentimes save lives. Those skills will be put to the test July 11-13 at the National Metal and Nonmetal Mine Rescue Contest at the Reno-Sparks Convention Center. The contest is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor's Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) and will feature 34 teams competing from around the country.

“The recent mining tragedies in West Virginia and Kentucky have brought home to us in a big way that mine rescue teams are essential to the safety and health of miners in this country,” said David G. Dye, acting administrator for MSHA. “These teams train and work hard to be ready for the day we hope will never come. Their efforts to improve their skills in exercises such as this contest are proof positive of their willingness to reach out to save their colleagues and friends.”

The contest consists of several events. In the “field” competition, teams must solve a hypothetical mine emergency problem while judges rate them on how well they adhere to mine rescue procedures and how quickly they complete specific tasks. In the first aid contest, emergency medical technicians tackle real-life scenarios. In the “benchman” and gas contests, individuals who maintain rescue equipment must thoroughly inspect breathing devices and gas instruments and quickly correct all defects.

Field, gas, bench and first-aid competitions take place July 11 and 12. On July 13, the top 14 teams will compete in a final round. An awards banquet will follow that evening at the Silver Legacy Resort Casino in Reno. During the banquet, six individuals who have exhibited exceptional accomplishments and commitment in the field of mine rescue will be inducted into the Metal/Nonmetal Mine Rescue Hall of Fame.

The 34 teams competing in the national contest represent mining operations located in Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Texas and Wyoming.

For a complete list of competing mine rescue teams, photographs, inductee profiles and contest results, visit MSHA's Web site at <http://www.msha.gov/MineRescue/CONTEST/2006MNM/2006HOME.asp>.

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