

# News Release



U.S. Department of Labor  
Office of Public Affairs  
Washington, D.C.  
Release Number: 07-1114-NAT

For Immediate Release  
July 25, 2007  
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## **Registration deadline for international mine rescue conference nears** *U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao to deliver opening remarks*

**ARLINGTON, Va.** – Registration for the U.S. Department of Labor’s Mine Safety and Health Administration’s (MSHA) international mine rescue conference in Nashville, Tenn., which will include opening remarks by Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao, will close August 1.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> International Mine Rescue Conference and National Mine Rescue Contest will be held August 29 through September 1 at the Gaylord Opryland Resort. Interested participants, including those who wish to attend only portions of the conference, must register prior to the August 1 deadline by calling (202) 693-9470.

“This conference is a unique opportunity for the American mining community to exchange critical information on mine rescue techniques and practices with experts from around the world,” said Richard E. Stickler, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health. “I strongly encourage everyone in the mining industry who cares about effective mine rescue to attend this important event.”

The conference will coincide with MSHA’s biennial National Coal Mine Rescue, First Aid, Pre-shift and Bench Competition, which will begin August 27 and wrap up with an awards banquet August 30. Mine rescue contests are mock mine emergencies in which rescue teams battle simulated fires, floods or roof falls to rescue their trapped colleagues underground. These teams undergo rigorous training throughout the year to sharpen skills that, should they ever need to use them, could save lives.

The first International Mine Rescue Conference was held in South Africa in October 2003 and the second in Sydney, Australia, two years later. More than 100 delegates attended the latter meeting, representing Australia, Canada, China, the Czech Republic, Germany, India, New Zealand, Norway, Poland and Romania, among other countries.

In May 2001, international mine rescue representatives held a meeting in Bytom, Poland, and agreed to appoint an International Mine Rescue Body. The body’s primary objective is to promote international mine rescue operations and cooperation. The group also agreed that each participating country would designate a coordinator to attend international meetings held every two years in a different nation.

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