40th Anniversary

National Mine Health and Safety Academy

1992 2000 2016

United States Department of Labor
MSHA
Mine Safety and Health Administration

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History of the National Mine Health and Safety Academy

Beginnings

Language in both the Federal Metal and Nonmetallic Mine Safety Act of 1966 and the Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969 addressed the need to train mine safety inspectors. The National Mine Health and Safety Academy, celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2016, has its origin in these laws.[1, 2]

Senator Robert C. Byrd (1917-2010), from Raleigh County, West Virginia, was instrumental in locating the "coal mine health and safety institute" in Beaver, West Virginia.[3]

Location and land availability were the main issues discussed in a series of negotiations between local representatives and the United States Bureau of Mines in 1971. The Bureau was willing to locate the "institute" in the Beckley area provided that enough land be given to them since there was no money in the budget to purchase land and to build the Senator's "dream facility…."[4]

Agreement to build the facility near Beckley, either near the Raleigh County Memorial Airport, or the Pinecrest Sanitarium received final approval. The Bureau, by January 1971, decided to build on a site "at the Raleigh County Airport… donated by the Raleigh County Airport Authority."[5]

News reports began referring to the proposed facility either as the "Bureau of Mines Academy" or the "Mine Academy." Preliminary reports suggested that up to 800 students would attend a two-year associate of arts degree program including class work in mine health and safety with an emphasis on coal mining. Training would be open to groups such as Federal and State inspectors and industry personnel. The Academy would offer short classes in special topics.

The original conception of the Academy was a series of buildings housing classrooms, offices, dormitory space, a cafeteria, laboratories, a library, shops, and a gymnasium.

Plans also called for development of an on-site "unmined" coal seam as a hands-on laboratory to teach mine electricity, roof and rib control, dust, ventilation, and explosives.

Planning was underway approximately a month later. The U.S. Congress appropriated $50,000 for engineering studies. The Deputy Director of the Bureau of Mines, Henry Wheeler, stressed the need to find a qualified "administrator" for the Academy to assist in laboratories and other aspects of the Academy's programs.

Original plans called for completion of construction by 1973 when staff and students would move to the new complex. Chatelain, Samperton and Nolan, a Washington, DC-based architectural firm was selected by the General Services Administration to provide design work for the Academy.[6]

First Training Classes

The Academy opened on September 7, 1971 with initial classes conducted at the Raleigh County Armory pending opening of a temporary storefront facility on South Fayette Street in downtown Beckley. Donald P. Schlick, the Bureau of Mines' Assistant Director for Coal Mine Health and Safety, addressing the new students, reminded them that, "Health and Safety is not just a frill or passing involvement – it is an essential to protect the industry's most important asset, the miner." He continued stating that the Academy was an attempt to "…create a new profession – the coal mine health and safety enforcement official." Schlick told the new students they had "…18 months to learn the persistent truths and new facts which [have] changed the business, our lives, and our professional development." He concluded that, "This academy is an experiment that will grow into a tradition, an experience that will grow into a formula for success…."

The Academy's curriculum included classroom work combined with on-the-job training in the field. According to James R. O'Neal, Director of the Academy, "Training in addition to the obvious work on mine ventilation, blasting, and other safety related subjects [was to] include classes in English, mathematics, the social aspects of the industry, a limited exposure to psychology, environmental problems, and the background of the development of the Bureau of Mines."[7]

Groundbreaking

A groundbreaking ceremony occurred on July 29, 1972. News reports covering the upcoming event commented that the Academy was to be the "West Point of the mining industry." The planned building was a "megastructure" housing a variety of facilities under one roof.[8]

"Student inspectors," in training at temporary facilities in Beckley, "followed a bulldozer into the space roped off for Saturday's ceremonies and did the final work of grubbing to clear a location for the trailer [owned by the State of West Virginia] which served as a speaker's platform and for the guests."

Both of West Virginia's Senators, Robert C. Byrd and Jennings Randolph, were at the groundbreaking along with other Federal, State, local and union officials.

Typical of July weather, rain started to fall promptly at 11:00 a.m. on the 29th, just as the groundbreaking ceremony began. The event was broadcast on live TV from a "mobile color van."

Senator Randolph introduced Senator Byrd, who gave the keynote speech. Randolph said "The purpose of the 1969 Act must not be breached." He took note of the weather, remarking that "The sun may not always shine in West Virginia, but the people always do."

Senator Byrd turned the first shovel of ground as more than 100 spectators stood huddled under umbrellas. His keynote address stressed that, “The purpose behind the Academy deserves the support of everyone whose concern is the betterment of life for the brave men who risk their lives so that the quality of life for all Americans may never diminish.”[9]

U.S. BUREAU OF MINES
Mine Health and Safety Academy
Beckley, West Virginia

PRESS RELEASE

For Release
Sunday, July 30. 1972

With the turn of a spade at noon yesterday (Saturday, July 29), construction of a 15 million dollar Mine Health and Safety Academy near Beckley, West Virginia, was initiated.

The ground was broken for this education and training facility by Senator Robert C. Byrd and Assistant Secretary of the Interior Hollis M. Dole, in the presence of a distinguished group of Federal and State officials including Governor Arch A. Moore, Jr., U. S. Senator Jennings Randolph, Bureau of Mines Director Elburt F. Osborn and others.

The Academy, to be operated by the U. S. Bureau of Mines, will train Federal mine inspectors in their responsibilities of enforcing health and safety standards in all coal mines and in metal and non-metal mines throughout the United States. It has been designed to handle as many as 600 students a year. In addition to Federal inspectors, the facility will be available for training State mine inspectors, and to a limited degree, personnel from the mineral industries.

"The purpose behind the Academy," Senator Byrd stated in making the principal address at the ceremonial groundbreaking "deserves the support of everyone whose concern is the betterment of life for the brave men who risk their lives so that the quality of life for all Americans may never diminish."

Pending completion of the facility which will include dormitories, shops, a library, cafeteria, and physical fitness facilities, as well as classrooms, the Bureau of Mines will continue training inspectors, technicians and other personnel in temporary quarters now located in the City of Beckley.

In his remarks at the groundbreaking, Hollis M. Dole, Assistant Secretary of the Interior, noted that the Academy, when completed, will help fulfill the objectives set by the Congress in the Federal Mine Health and Safety Laws which are designed to protect the health and promote the safety of workers engaged in all phases of mining.

"This Academy," Dole said, "will provide a place for young people dedicated to mining to receive training in all important aspects of mine health and safety."

The curriculum at the Academy will include courses in suppression and control of mine dusts that can cause "black lung" and other respiratory diseases. Classes will also be conducted in mine ventilation, electricity, underground haulage and hoisting, roof control, industrial hygiene, provisions of the Law and other pertinent subjects.

More than a hundred West Virginians joined Washington officials and representatives of mine labor and management witnessing the groundbreaking ceremony.

Academy Construction: 1972-1976

Construction of the Academy complex began in January 1972, when site preparation including clearing, grading, parking lots, road construction, and paving was complete. Local press reports mentioned that J.W. Bateson (the prime contractor) was on site on January 15. Foundation excavation and construction began the week of January 28. The scheduled completion date for the project moved back to February 1976.

A summary report, issued in July 1973, updated Academy construction and planning. A plan to extend sewer and water lines to the Academy site was in place, and the report said that 90 percent of this work would be complete by the end of July.[10]

In 1973, the Secretary of the Interior ordered creation of the Mining Enforcement and Safety Administration (MESA), to assume health and safety functions of the Bureau of Mines and, thereby, separate these responsibilities from mineral development interests. The Academy became a part of this organization.

Money issues were a concern and a news release mentioned that there was $13 million available for construction and an additional $2.8 million was needed.

An ongoing shortage of structural steel (because of high demand) slowed completion of the Academy complex. Schedules called for manufacture of the steel ordered for the project in February 1974, but the “rolling date” was postponed several times.

Residents of West Virginia followed development of the Academy closely. A scale model of the Academy went on display at Beckley area banks, the West Virginia State Fair, and the West Virginia Coal Show throughout the summer of 1974. Senator Byrd toured the site with Morgan Huntington, an engineer with the Bureau of Mines and Charles G. Railey of the General Services Administration (GSA) to review the progress of construction.

The Academy’s design had not deviated much from its original plan. There were to be five interconnected buildings including a dormitory, administration building, classroom wing, gymnasium, and shop, but Railey mentioned that the Academy presented “…intriguing problems for the contractor because of its innovative and unusual design....” He said the Academy had “four different types of structures and none of them are conventional.” Structural work on the administration building was finished and pouring concrete for the dormitory was well underway. The overall completion date for the complex was July 1976.[11]

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
The mesa Miner
MINING ENFORCEMENT AND SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

January, 1975 Vol. 2, No. 1

Beckley, W. Va., Facility Will Be Completed in '76

MESA Academy To Be Finished Early

Architect's Model, National Academy of Mine Health and Safety

By Anne Woodward Thomas

Steel girders, etched starkly against the bleak, midwinter landscape of Beckley, W.Va., outline what will soon become the U.S. Government's seventh full-fledged Academy—the National Mine Health and Safety Academy.

Already 45 per cent constructed, by spring the new MESA Academy, like the countryside around it, will be astir with activity. "Building is moving ahead of schedule", notes Dr. Michael Zabetakis, Deputy Assistant Administrator of Education and Training for MESA, and Acting Superintendent of the Academy. "We are targeted for completion in the spring of 1976."

Scheduled to be in action later that year, the academic complex at Beckley will accommodate more than 600 students in 13 classrooms, a handful of demonstration-lecture rooms, a drafting room, and seven laboratories. The dormitory, which is on campus and largely composed of double rooms, will house some 350 fledgling safety inspectors enrolled for the intensive nine-month course. A three-pronged curriculum, designed for on-campus students, commuters from the town of Beckley, and students-by-mail, will require a teaching staff of around 120 experts.

Its designation as a Federal Academy puts Beckley in line with the F.B.I. Academy, West Point, Annapolis, Kings Point and the Air Force and Coast Guard Academies, a rare distinction for a non-military institution. Beckley Academy defends the nation against mine injuries and disease. Authorized by Congress in 1966, its creation underscores the strong support given in the United States to safety in one of the nation's most vital industries—mining. The stated aim of the new Academy is "accident reduction in the nation's mines through education and training."

Progress at Beckley, expected to receive far-flung attention, is already under the watchful eyes of foreign countries where mining is a major industry. England and Germany have their own mine safety schools, and Japan a school for safety in engineering. Beckley, however, will be the first national institution devoted to safety education and training for high-productivity mining. MESA is developing special textbooks and training systems related to these conditions.

Located in the middle of rolling West Virginia hills, the $20-million Academy will be neighbor to the Raleigh County Airport, which services Piedmont and Allegheny Airlines, but not yet jets. The airport donated the Academy's 70 acres.

(Continued on Next Page)

Let Us Hear From You

What's going on out there? Somebody must be making some "news" fit to print in the *MESA Miner*—like having an interesting hobby, or catching a big fish. Let's let others in MESA know if you play in a rock-and-roll band or have a star athlete in the family. Be sure to send pictures if you have them.

ROBERT L. McKEAND—has assumed his duties as assistant superintendent of the National Mine Health and Safety Academy in Beckley, W. Va. He was formerly the manager of the OSHA Training Institute in Rosemont, Ill. Prior to that he managed a training center for the Internal Revenue Service. McKeand graduated from Hanover College and received his Master's Degree from Marquette University.

Academy Ahead of Schedule

(Continued from Page 1)

Beckley, a town of around 20,000 persons in the southeast part of this important coal-mining state, is only five miles away. Since the Academy will eventually accommodate 600 motor vehicles on an immense lot, students taking short courses may be able to commute to the Academy from Beckley or other nearby towns by car. MESA has already conducted special short-term seminars, and one 18-month training course, in a converted restaurant in Beckley, while awaiting construction of the Academy's permanent facilities.

Designed by the Washington, D.C. architectural firm of Chatelain, Samperton and Nolan, the new concrete and metal building will look something like a flattened S-curve. At center will be a large, rectangular, two-story "core" structure, focus of administration and faculty offices, as well as a cafeteria that can feed 800 in one hour, a kitchen, health care unit, student store, mail room, and a 400-seat auditorium-in-the-round. Flanking the core will be two smaller buildings, the shop for mining equipment, and the gymnasium. Each of these will be connected by a walkway to a larger arm housing, on one side, the four-story student dormitory, and on the other, a single-story academic complex containing classrooms, library, and laboratory. The dormitory and academic complex could later be extended.

In bad weather, students will undoubtedly be grateful for the fully-enclosed "student street," a tunnel-like, walkway, 25-feet wide and nearly a quarter of a mile long, leading from bedrooms to classrooms through the connected buildings. Periodically, they will be able to see upward through sky-lights. In nearly all areas of the Academy, they may view the outdoors through large, bronze-tinted glass windows, shielded from the sun by extended roof overhangs which give the dormitory a sloping appearance.

Present plans for education at the Academy include about four hours of classroom lectures and demonstrations each morning, followed by afternoons relegated to student workouts in safety techniques with equipment in the Academy's laboratories. Equipment will be both standard and scaled. Eventually, MESA hopes that the Academy will include an above-ground model mine, to further aid in safety demonstrations. The model would be used to simulate safety techniques in low, medium, and high coal mining.

Training will consist of three basic programs. Mine-inspector trainees, mostly high school graduates with some mining experience, selected for the experience by MESA inspectors, will undergo a full academic year, "Core Course," divided into three quarters. The first two quarters will apply to future inspectors at both coal and metal/non-metal mines. The third, more advanced quarter will be tailored separately to the two different types of mine inspection.

On completion of their curriculum, graduates will receive a certificate of training, and return to individual headquarters. They will return annually to the Academy, however, in Phase Two of Beckley training—the one to three-week Seminar Program, which will cover topics ranging from basic to highly technical safety techniques. Miners and Industry personnel will be eligible for both the Seminar and resident programs.

A Continuing Education Program, the third aspect of the Academy's education, will give enrollees a chance to become knowledgeable at the highest levels of the mine health and safety profession.

Student residents of the Academy will keep in trim through use of an outdoor swimming pool or volleyball, handball, and basketball courts.

New MESA Pamphlet

MESA recently published the first in a series of mine safety manuals which are available to the public. "Mine Gases," the first pamphlet to be released in the series, is a 42-page pocket-sized publication which deals with the gases to be found in a mine atmosphere and depicts the instruments used to detect hazardous gases.

Each pamphlet in the series is designed to provide information on a single mine health and safety subject. MESA Administrator Day said: "The safety manuals of this new series are designed to be used by miners, students and others interested in mining to gain a rather detailed background knowledge on specific areas of mining."

"Mine Gases," a two-color pamphlet is supported by many illustrations and includes a bibliography of publications on mine gases.

Copies of "Mine Gases" are available to the public for $1.20 each from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. In ordering, specify title, number of copies and Stock Number 2419-00005. The publication is not sold by MESA.

Votes Are Coming In

We have received an enthusiastic response to the quest for a permanent name for the newsletter. Running a close race are, *"The MESA Miner"* and *"The MESA Messenger"*. We hope to have a decision in time for the February issue.

The MESA Miner

A publication for and about MESA employees published by the MESA Information Office.

Mining Enforcement and Safety Administration

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September 1975

United States Department of the Interior mesa Mining Enforcement and Safety Administration Messenger

Academy Officials Named

Zabetakis Will Head Academy

Roberts

More

Chipps

McKeand

Nacey

Wakefield

Dr. Michael G. Zabetakis has been appointed Superintendent of the National Mine Health and Safety Academy in Beckley, West Virginia. Dr. Zabetakis, Acting Superintendent of the Academy for the past year, has pursued various careers as an educator, as a consultant to industry in the field of safety, and as a 25 year employee of the Federal government.

The Academy, sixth of this Nation's Federal Academies, was established through training provisions of the Federal Metal and Nonmetallic Mine Safety Act of 1966 and the Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969. Presently operating out of temporary quarters, the Academy will open for full time residential students in a nine month course of instruction in July of 1976. The Academy will offer programs in continuing education, seminar programs, and other programs of special studies.

Dr. Zabetakis received his B.S. with honors in Chemistry from Washington and Jefferson College in 1943. A year later the college awarded him an M.S. with majors in Physics and Mathematics. In 1956, he received the degree of

Please turn to Pg. 2

Zabetakis

98 ADP Terminals Scheduled

Acquisition of a central computer system planned for 1976 with eventual link-ups to all district and sub-district offices will speed up MESA's information collecting and analyzing process.

The computer terminals will be located in all education centers, district and sub-district offices, as well as MESA's HQs, and will enable management to respond more rapidly in handling queries through the combined use of other Interior Department computer systems and the mails.

With a central computer belonging exclusively to MESA, ADP-user offices will have access to common master files.

In addition to the increased administrative and technical efficiency afforded by this new system, it will provide MESA with better data security in such sensitive areas as miners' health records and fines and penalties.

Requests for Proposals were issued in July for both the computer and terminals. Award for the computer will be made by December 30, with estimated date of installation in late April, 1976. The terminals contract will be awarded in mid-September, with the earliest installation date estimated between October 15 and December 15.

Initially, 35 terminals (20 for coal; 15 for Metal/Nonmetal) will be ordered, but ADP hopes to have 98 installed by the end of 1976.

Academy, *From Pg. 1*

Doctor of Philosophy in Physical Chemistry from the University of Pittsburgh. He is an internationally recognized expert in the fields of gas explosions and Cryogenics, and has testified for the government in many cases before the Federal Courts. He has also served as consultant for NASA in the testing of cryogenic fuels used to power America's missiles in the space program, and as a technical advisor to the Air Force in its aircraft and missile fuels.

Robert L. McKeand, in government service since 1942, will serve as Assistant Superintendent of the Academy. McKeand has managed training centers for the Internal Revenue Service, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and MESA.

John Wakefield will head the Academy's Seminar Department. Formerly Director of Admissions at American University, Wakefield is a member of Kappa Phi Kappa, the Honorary Education Fraternity.

Edward R. Nacey will head the Academy's Department of Continuing Education. A former career Air Force Officer, Nacey previously directed the residency program at the Armed Forces Industrial War College.

Edward Roberts will direct the Academy's Resident Department. Roberts, professional mining engineer and career Interior Department employee, brings 25 years of Federal mine health and safety enforcement, and education and training experience to the post.

Dr. Kenneth R. More will serve as the Academy's Chief, Research and Planning Department. More has been professor of physics at several universities, and has held responsible positions with the Defense Department and the Interior Department in the field of operations research.

Robert P. Chipps has been appointed the Academy's Business Manager. He holds an engineering degree, a masters degree in public administration, and is a candidate for a doctorate in public administration from the University of Southern California.■

Meet The Press

Editor Views Penalty Process

(The people who tell MESA's story for the press around the United States are vitally interested in what MESA is doing. The Messenger will be bringing you a series of "Meet the Press" columns so that you may become familiar with who the press is and what they think of the job MESA is doing.)

Nick Chironis

Nicholas P. Chironis is Senior Editor of *Coal Age* Magazine. He writes feature articles for the magazine in addition to three columns: *Washington Scene,* a research column called *Developments to Watch,* and a column that frequently involves MESA activities - *Focus on Health and Safety.* Last fall Chironis interviewed former Administrator, Jim Day. The subsequent story, "Jim Day's MESA . . . A dynamic organization expanding its functions in health and safety", said Chironis, "produced quite a bit of feedback from the readers, some of whom were critical of Day and others sympathetic with his problems." "Personally," he continued, "I have felt that the decision to appoint a lawyer to head MESA was a good one because of the frequent tangles that MESA becomes involved in during the process of assessing and collecting fines."

Commenting on the penalties program Chironis said, "The judicial procedure has caused a backlog in the collection of fines of previously assessed violations, so it seems unwarranted on the part of the United Mine Workers to have accused MESA and Jim Day of settling for less in fines than can be obtained. MESA must do its job, but at the same time must not usurp the legal rights of the coal companies and their personnel."

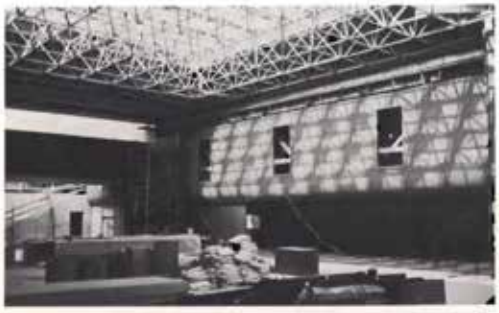
A graduate of the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn (now Polytechnic Institute of New York), Chironis holds a Bachelor degree in Mechanical Engineering, and a Master's degree in Mechanical Engineering. He has been an editor with McGraw-Hill since 1955.■

Off-duty Joseph S. Uholik, Surface Mine Inspector (Coal), District 1, Schuylkill Haven Field Office, uses his assessments expertise on the ball field. He is umpire for his hometown Six-Team Shenandoah Little League. Almost singlehandedly, Joe built the Little League stadium and maintains the grounds.

MESA Magazine - November-December 1975

New academy to train inspectors

In the last quarter of the 19th century, the editor of an obscure weekly newspaper in Hazleton, Pa., looked around at the growing anthracite industry and found, among other things, enormous frustration. The path to an excellent job as mine foreman was open to any miner who could pass the tests administered by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The problem was, however, that the miners had no way to study for the tests, and their frustration was immense.



Acting on the assumption that there was a literate public out there, the editor put a short notice in the next edition of his paper, asking whether any of his readers might be interested in pursuing a correspondence course in mining practices and mining safety.

Twenty thousand answered YES!

He did the sensible thing. He quit his job as editor and moved up to Scranton. There, on the solid foundation of training in mining practices and mining safety, he founded

A model of the campus of the MESA Academy is shown in the bottom photo. Top picture shows a recent construction scene. Academy is to be opened in July 1976.

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the organization we know today as the International Correspondence Schools.

Through the century since then, the training of mine foremen, supervisors, and mine inspectors has gradually moved away from the haphazard toward the more formal. That training will reach a new high point in July of 1976 when the first class in residence starts its studies at the newly created National Mine Health and Safety Academy in Beckley, W.Va.

The principal purpose of the Academy is to train inspectors over a complete academic year, with basic core courses covered in the first two quarters and advanced courses in the last quarter.

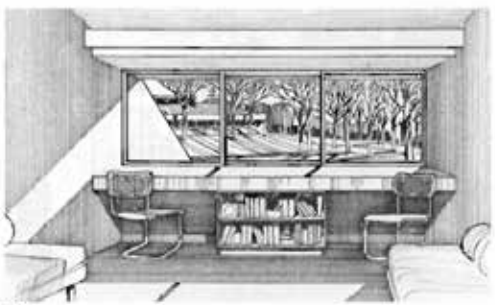
The curriculum is:

1st Quarter:
- Survey of Mining
- Safety Engineering
- Mine Emergency Procedures
- Administrative Procedures
- Technical Writing

2nd Quarter:
- Mine Electricity
- Mine Ventilation
- Investigative Procedures
- Industrial Psychology
- Industrial Hygiene

3rd Quarter (Coal):
- Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969
- Inspection Procedures
- Coal Mining
- Roof Control

3rd Quarter (Metal/Nonmetal):
- Federal Metal and Nonmetallic Mine Safety Act
- Inspection Procedures
- Metal and Nonmetal Mining
- Earth Mechanics



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Dr. Michael Zabetakis, newly appointed superintendent of the Academy, points out that the Resident Program is only one of three programs planned.

A Seminar Program will offer short courses, seminars, conferences, and workshops in mine health and safety to personnel in all phases of the mining industry. It will provide a forum where they can meet to discuss solutions to problems related to their particular segment of the mining industry. Covering a wide range of topics from the very basic to the highly technical, the programs will last from one or two days up to three weeks.

A Continuing Education Program will cover a wide range of subject material related to mining health and safety, generally paralleling the curriculum in the Resident and Seminar programs. Although primarily directed at the non-resident student, the program will also support the Resident and Seminar programs by providing opportunities for students in these programs to complete individual study in an area of particular interest.

The Academy is located on forty acres of ground adjacent to the airport at Beckley. The main building at the Academy will house the administration and faculty offices, a health-care unit, mail room, a 400-seat auditorium, and food service facilities equipped to handle 600 students, with expansion possibilities to handle up to 800.

A single-story academic wing, a dormitory, an inspection shop, a garage, and a gymnasium will complete the physical plant at the Academy.

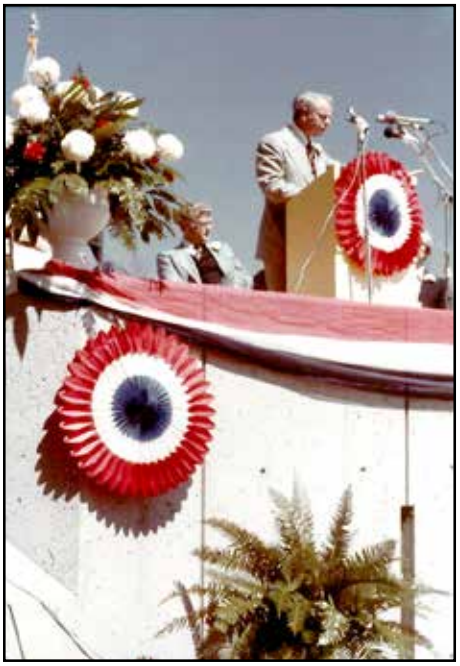
Dr. Zabetakis, the superintendent, is an internationally recognized expert in the field of safety. In addition to a long career in the Bureau of Mines and MESA, he has served as a consultant to NASA in the testing of cryogenic fuels and as a technical advisor to the Air Force in its aircraft and missile fuels programs. He is the author of more than seventy-five publications.

Assisting Dr. Zabetakis in the administration of the Academy will be Robert L. McKeand, assistant superintendent; John Wakefield, head of the Seminar Department; Edward R. Nacey, head of the Continuing Education Department; Edward Roberts, head of the Resident Department; Dr. Kenneth R. More, chief, Research and Planning Department; and Robert P. Chipps, business manager.

A staff of more than 100 persons is expected once the Academy becomes fully operational. The Resident Program is planned for 200 full-time students.

Dedications – April 3 and August 17, 1976

There were two separate dedication ceremonies for the National Mine Health and Safety Academy. The first dedication was for the classroom building, on April 3, 1976. The Raleigh County Airport Authority hosted the event. Senator Robert C. Byrd, called the "…patron saint of the National Mine Health and Safety Academy," by local newspapers, cut two ribbons and delivered remarks to the audience. He said that it had taken seven years of hard work to "…secure this facility, the only one of its kind in the United States." Byrd also stressed the potential economic benefits for Beckley and Raleigh County.[12]



The United States celebrated its 200th birthday on July 4, 1976. Six weeks later, Senator Byrd dedicated the Academy on August 17. Senator Byrd, described in a Department of the Interior Press Release as "…the moving force in securing the $20.6 million to construct, equip and staff the Academy…," was the keynote speaker. Secretary of the Interior Thomas A. Kleppe spoke as well.

Kleppe began his remarks by saying that, "Good mining is safe mining. Safe mining begins with education and training for everyone connected with the mine." He continued by noting that the Academy would train mine inspectors; however, "…through all the programs that will be devised as the Academy progresses, there will be an enormous spread of this education and training throughout the mining industry."

"Built at a cost of $20.6 million for construction and equipment the Academy is situated on a 40-acre tract adjacent to the Raleigh [County] airport just outside the city of Beckley. The tract and an additional 30 acres for future expansion were donated by the Raleigh County Airport Authority and the County Commission.

The Academy is a huge building, a quarter of a mile in length containing the administration section, academic [classroom] wing, dormitory wing, mining equipment shop, equipment storage section, and recreation section. A centrally-located cafeteria is equipped to handle 600, with expansion possibilities to handle 800."

"MESA Academy Dedicated." MESA Messenger, August, 1976, p. 1

The Secretary noted that, “If supplying the energy needs of America is one of the great challenges of the future, then where could America possibly invest its money more wisely than in the protection of the health and safety of the men who will do so much to supply that energy?”

He concluded by recognizing groups and individuals who had worked together to make the National Mine Health and Safety Academy a reality. “Working together, many people were able to build this academy. Working together, many people can guarantee that it will fulfill its mission.”

The theme of Senator Byrd’s address was that the miner was “…a special kind of person” whose job required a “combination of skill, energy, and courage.” He remarked that the new Academy would draw mine safety and health professionals from throughout the Nation to receive high quality, practical training to help them reduce accidents, injuries, and illnesses in the Nation’s mines.

“The main work of the Academy will center around three residence programs. A 12-week course of study will prepare experienced mining personnel to become mine inspectors. A 36-week course of study will prepare students with little or no direct mining experience to become mine inspectors. A 24-week safety management and health management program will be offered to persons interested in pursuing a mine safety or occupational health management career in MESA, other Federal or state government agencies, or the mining industry.

A seminar program will provide annual up-to-date training and retraining of mine inspectors and will also organize timely seminars.

The workload of the seminar department will be divided among three primary areas: coal mine health and safety, metal/nonmetal mine health and safety, and management training, professional development, and special programs.

The continuing education department will provide education and training to MESA employees as well as to other personnel in government and the mining industry. The program will include correspondence courses, programmed instruction and audiovisual materials which can be administered by mail to the non-resident student.

The first class of inspectors making full use of the facility is presently in residence.”

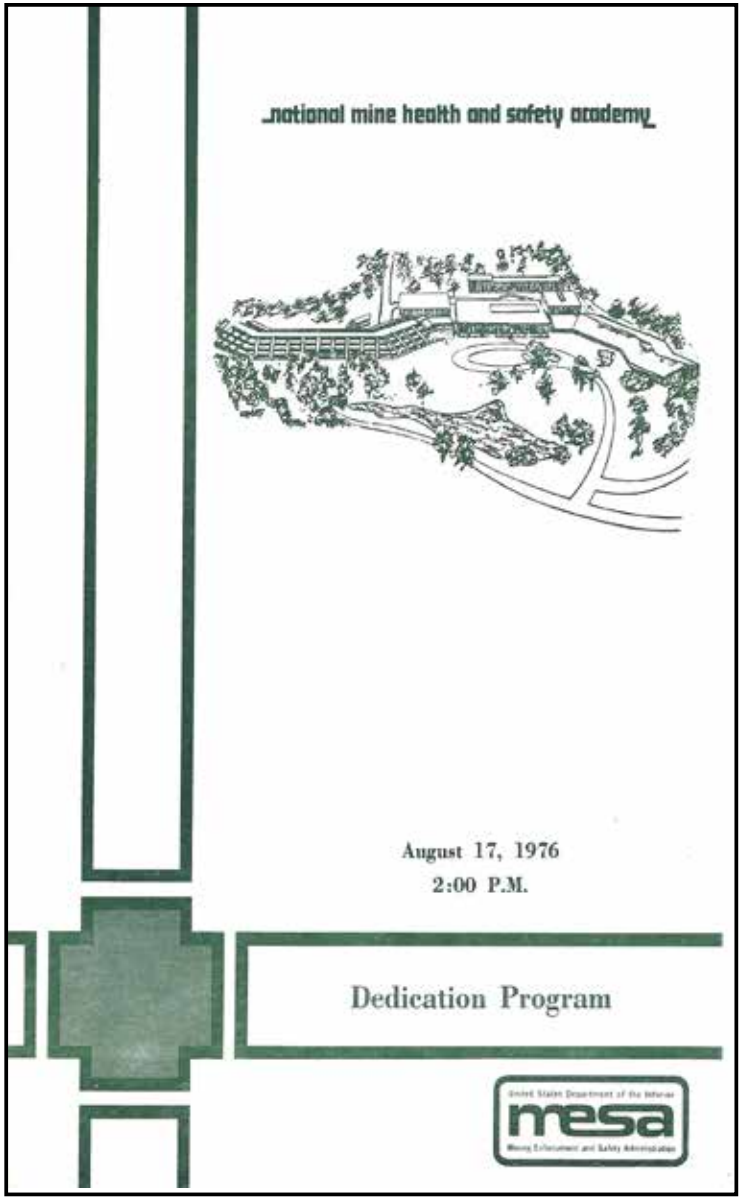
“MESA Academy Dedicated.” MESA Messenger, August, 1976, p. 1[13]

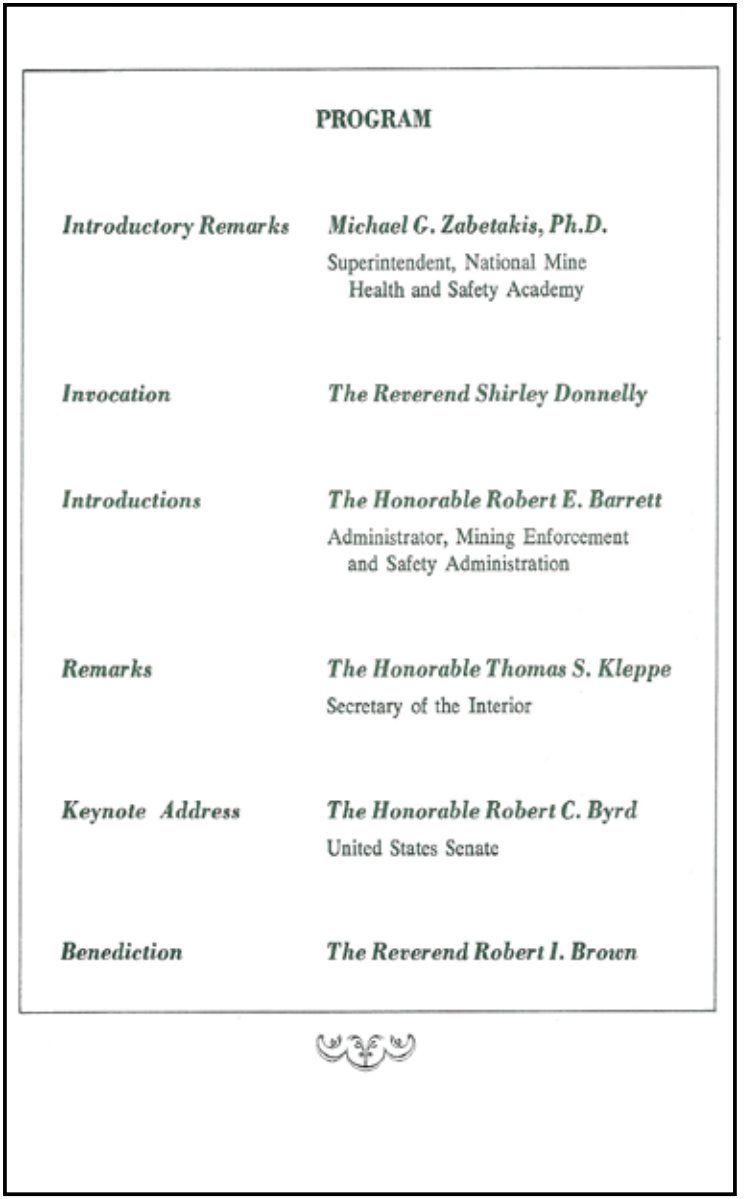
A Big Day at the Academy

Mine inspector training now is under way at MESA's newly opened National Mine Health and Safety Academy near Beckley, W.Va., with "continuing education" and special training programs being offered for persons unable to attend full time. Shown here are earlier scenes of Dedication Day activities at the Academy, whose front exterior appears directly above. Other photos show **(2)** Interior Secretary Thomas S. Kleppe with Senator Robert C. Byrd (D., W.Va.), whom Kleppe praised for his role in creation of the Academy; **(3)** from left, Interior Assistant Secretary for Energy and Minerals William L. Fisher, MESA Administrator Robert E. Barrett, and United Mine Workers of America President Arnold Miller; **(4)** visitors attending auditorium ceremonies; **(5)** a cardiopulmonary resuscitation demonstration, with, kneeling from left, Gloria Smith and John Wakefield of the Beckley staff, and Interior Deputy Undersecretary Fred G. Karem, and, standing, from left, James Parrott and Academy Superintendent Michael Zabetakis; **(6)** visitor registration; **(7)** local band members; and **(8)** Academy staff member Don Farley giving a "Magic of Fire" demonstration for, from left, retired MESA official Elwood Thomson and MESA's William Yost and Louis Rossitol.

14

15





PROGRAM

Introductory Remarks	*Michael G. Zabetakis, Ph.D.* Superintendent, National Mine Health and Safety Academy
Invocation	*The Reverend Shirley Donnelly*
Introductions	*The Honorable Robert E. Barrett* Administrator, Mining Enforcement and Safety Administration
Remarks	*The Honorable Thomas S. Kleppe* Secretary of the Interior
Keynote Address	*The Honorable Robert C. Byrd* United States Senate
Benediction	*The Reverend Robert I. Brown*

Copy of the originial program from the August 17, 1976 dedication.

PROGRAM SUPPLEMENT

General Services Administration constructed this Federal Building for MESA, under the direction of Mr. John F. Galuardi, Regional Administrator (GSA Region 3), with David Kassab and staff overseeing the work of. . .

J. W. Bateson and Co., the prime contractors on the job, with Jack Waschitz, Project Manager for the subcontractors listed on the back page of this program, with funds provided by. . .

The Congress of the United States, upon the recommendations of the Appropriations Committee under the leadership of Senator Robert C. Byrd, and with the special support of. . .

Citizens of the City of Beckley and Raleigh County, West Virginia, on land donated by the . . .

Raleigh County Airport Authority and **Raleigh County Commission**

Charles S. Lewis, Jr.—Chairman
Larkin S. Philpott
E. V. Bowman
Harry W. Gilbert, Jr.
Paul R. Hutchinson, Jr.—Attorney

Minor L. Scott—President
Walter James
H. K. Manning

Chatelain, Samperton and Nolan of Washington, D.C., were architects for the structure; the interior was designed by. . .

Hunter/Miller Associates of Alexandria, Virginia.

THOSE WHO BUILT THE ACADEMY

J. W. Bateson and Co.—Prime Contractor
Zando, Martin and Milstead, Inc.—Inspectors

William S. Alt & Son
Architectural Fabricators
Automatic Sprinkler Corp. of America
Blue Stone Paving, Inc.
Peter Bratti & Assoc., Inc.
Brimar Construction Co., Inc.
Bristol Steel & Iron Works, Inc.
Central Glass Co.
Commercial Roofing & Sheet Metal, Inc.
Congrib, Inc.
Cotton Elevator Company
J. B. Eurell Co.
Gatlinburg Construction Co., Inc.
Global Steel Products Corp.
John H. Hampshire, Inc.
Hastings Pavement Co., Inc.
Heywood-Wakefield Company
Hug Concrete Co.
Hussey Manufacturing Co., Inc.
Industrial First, Inc.
Interior Steel Equipment, Co.
Jed Products Co.
Liskey Aluminum Inc.
MFG Associates Inc.
Modern School Equipment, Inc.
North American Door Co.
P. & H. Steel Erectors, Inc.
Price Brothers Corp.
Prospect Industries, Inc.
Ranger Enterprises
H. H. Robertson Company
Sauer, Inc.
Siciliano Interior Systems Co.
Tonstad Caulking & Waterproofing Co., Inc.
Truland Corporation
U. S. Steel Corp.
Western Waterproofing Co., Inc.
W. Va. Drywall Company

Copy of the originial program from the August 17, 1976 dedication. (Continued)

MSHA Established

Congress enacted the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977 (Mine Act) not long after the Academy's dedication. The Mine Act combined all Federal regulations (coal and metal/nonmetal) into a single law. "The 1977 Act "strengthened and expanded the rights of miners and enhanced the protection of miners from retaliation for exercising such rights."[13]

The Act transferred MESA's enforcement activities to the Department of Labor in 1977. The Department of Labor named the new agency the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA). The Academy remained part of the Department of the Interior until its transfer to the Department of Labor on July 25, 1979.

mesa Messenger

APRIL 1977

President supports transfer of MESA to labor

The Carter Administration is now supporting proposed legislation moving MESA from the Interior to the Labor Department.

At present it is speculative when MESA would be transferred if the legislation passed and were signed into law. Senior MESA officials emphasize that most all of MESA's employees will be unaffected by the proposed transfer.

"No matter where we are," said MESA Administrator Robert E. Barrett, "we still have a vital job to do — protecting the health and safety of America's miners."

The bills specify that there will be no reduction in classification or compensation for MESA personnel for a year after the transfer.

Secretary of the Interior Cecil D. Andrus gave the Carter administration's position on the transfer issue on April 1 in testimony before House and Senate subcommittees considering legislation that would move MESA to Labor and strengthen existing mine health and safety laws.

The bills, S. 717 in the Senate and H.R. 4287 in the House, contain similar provisions and combine the Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969 and the Federal Metal and Nonmetallic Mine Safety Act into one law. The Secretary told the Congress that the Department of the Interior and the administration consider the bills an urgent high priority.

MESA and the Interior Department have suggested several amendments for improving the proposed legislation and some of its provisions may be changed as it moves through the Congress.

Both bills provide for—

— Establishment of a Mine Safety and Health administration in the Department of Labor to be headed by an Assistant Secretary of Labor for Mine Health and Safety

— Retention of the National Mine Health and Safety Academy as an agency of the Interior Department

— No reductions in the number of inspectors engaged in enforcing current mine health and safety legislation, and

— Mine health research to be carried out by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health and research relating to safety to be carried out by the Interior Department.

At the hearings held by the House Subcommittee on Compensation, Health and Safety, Representative Joseph Gaydos assured Interior officials that the transfer of MESA to the Labor Department "is not going to destroy a job well done." ■

Growth and Expansion - Publication Center

Developing and distributing print and nonprint training materials for all parts of the mining community was a big part of the Academy's mission from its beginning. The Academy found itself overwhelmed for requests for training materials less than four years after its dedication. Therefore, the agency decided to add a Publications Distribution Center to the Academy complex "because the "…demand for printed materials in mine safety and health [had] grown much faster than expected and the distribution of these materials was not part of the original Academy concept."

A fact sheet about the new center said it would serve "…all of MSHA [by providing] health and safety information to labor, industry, government, and the general public."

The center design specified a 22,000 square-foot two story building connected to the rest of the Academy complex. Construction began on June 1, 1980, and with completion in June 1981 it was under budget and approximately five months ahead of schedule.

The first floor contained the Academy Print Shop as well as a warehouse and distribution facility. The center's second floor included a large classroom, the Academy's Audiovisual and Photography sections (including a TV studio and edit suite for on-site production), the Continuing Education Department, the Beckley Training Center, and a Graphics shop. These facilities moved from locations throughout the academy into a single location.

Senator Robert C. Byrd spoke at the center's outdoor dedication on August 14, 1981. He said that "…from this center will come books, pamphlets, and manuals that will help miners avoid accidents and death."[14]

DEDICATION CEREMONY

PUBLICATIONS DISTRIBUTION CENTER

Date: August 13, 1981

Time: 2:00 P.M.

Location: National Mine Health and Safety Academy

SPEAKERS:

Welcome: Mr. Richard M. Johnson
Acting Superintendent

Invocation: Reverend Lester Hall

Introduction: Mr. Thomas J. Shepich
Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Mine Safety and Health

Speaker: Senator Robert C. Byrd

Ribbon Cutting: Senator Robert C. Byrd

Refreshments: In publications storage area first floor rear - new building

Guests are invited to have refreshments and tour the new facility. Academy staff will be on hand to answer questions.

The Publications Distribution Center is a 25,000 square ft. addition to the Academy complex and will help the Mine Safety and Health Administration to better serve the needs of the mining community for mine safety and health publications and training materials.

As part of its mission to promote mine safety and health, the Academy each year distributes some 300,000 copies of a wide variety of publications, such as the ones that are on display at the entrance to the new addition. As well as housing the distribution activity, the addition provides working quarters for some of the MSHA specialists who develop and produce many of the Academy's publications and training materials.

Designed by Gates Engineering Company of Beckley, West Virginia, the new facility was completed ahead of schedule at a cost of less than 2 million dollars. The general contractor was The Guy Johnston Construction Company of Steubenville, Ohio, and several firms from southern West Virginia provided extensive subcontracting support.

Growth and Expansion - Mine Simulation Laboratory

Hands-on instruction has always been an important part of the Academy's work. The idea of having an underground coal mine on the Academy's property was in the thoughts of planners, but they shelved the idea because of extreme costs and potential danger.

By 1976 an article in the MESA Magazine mentioned that the Academy was "…looking toward an above-ground, simulated mine that could be used for a variety of training programs [such as] ventilation and mine rescue training."

"As presently envisioned, the simulated mine would be a complex of tunnels. It would include sections with a 4-foot roof for low-coal training as well as sections with a 7-foot roof for high-coal training."

The Mine Simulation Laboratory was built to "…enable the Academy to further expand its role as the national center for mine health and safety inspection and investigation training by delivering realistic, practical, and useful mine inspector training to Federal mine inspectors and other State and private sector mining industry personnel."

An introduction to the laboratory explained that instructors could use the facility to "Create different mining environments by building stoppings, beltlines, regulators, hanging brattice cloth, and installing simulated mining machines. Fighting actual fires gave students hands-on fire safety training."

"The simulated underground coal mine is on the laboratory's lower level. It has four entries and nine crosscuts. The metal/nonmetal simulated mine is on the upper level. It has a series of passageways designed to simulate "manways" in an underground metal/nonmetal mine.

The facility has a 100 thousand cubic feet per minute (CFM) mine fan. Three concrete burn pads were built outside the structure for use in fire training exercises.

The laboratory is used to teach Mine Ventilation, Mine Rescue, Mine Emergency Response Development and Fire Protection along with other academy training courses."

Excerpted from National Mine Health and Safety Academy. About the Mine Simulation Laboratory (1993)

As built, the 48,000 square-foot building contained both a simulated coal mine and a simulated metal/nonmetal mine. The Mine Simulation Laboratory, "one of seven laboratories at the Academy" was dedicated on September 1, 1992.[15] The Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977 was amended by the Mine Improvement and New Emergency Response Act of 2006 (MINER Act) on June 15,[16] increasing the requirements for mine rescue training.

Carrying the Mission Into the Future

The Academy is now 40 years old. Through the years it has continued to accomplish successfully its mission of improving the health and safety of our Nation's miners through education and training.

Mine safety training has developed continually and rapidly since the Academy opened its doors four decades ago. Training was conducted in a classroom setting with media such as motion pictures, filmstrips, and tape and slide programs. Instructional media evolved into videotape and satellite-delivered training, and then into today's instructional and interactive DVDs and online training via the internet.

Training, however, is more than electronically-delivered programs. The Academy continues to develop and present onsite and offsite classes for MSHA inspectors, other safety personnel, and to the national and international mining community while at the same time exploring constantly ways to deliver even more effective training to its clients.

The National Mine Health and Safety Academy has, since its beginning, facilitated conferences and seminars designed to give health and safety personnel opportunities to meet, network, and exchange and explain new ideas on how to make mines safer places in which to work. It also has served as a venue to explain changes and new developments in all phases of mine safety, technology, and health and safety law to all.

Cooperative agreements with other safety, academic, industry, and related organizations (both here and overseas) have been a hallmark of academy outreach since its beginning.

The Academy staff looks forward to continuing its work in all of these areas and to exploring new opportunities to provide the best, most up-to-date training and training materials to all of our clients.

Source Notes

1. U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration. "History of Mine Safety and Health Legislation." p. 1 http://arlweb.msha.gov/MSHAINFO/MSHAINF2.htm (link active June 2016)

2. Public Law 91-173, 91st Congress, S. 2917 December 30, 1969. 'Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969." Washington: GPO, 1969, p. 59.

3. Robert C. Byrd," in The West Virginia Encyclopedia. http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/756 (link active June 2016.) See also Byrd, Robert C. Child of the Appalachian Coalfields. Morgantown, West Virginia University Press, 2005, p. 199. (hereafter cited as Byrd, Child.)

4. See Ibid., pp 180-181 for Senator Byrd's explanation of site negotiations.

5. U.S. Works Progress Administration. West Virginia – A Guide to the Mountain State. New York: Oxford University Press, 1941, p. 400. See "Interior Approves Site: Mine Health Academy to Be Built At Airport." Raleigh Register, January 26, 1971. **NOTES**: The Bureau of Mines was an agency of the U.S. Department of the Interior. The Academy is located on a 70-acre site. See also Byrd, Child, pp. 293-294, 30.

6. "Mine Facility Completion Expected Within 2 Years." Beckley Post-Herald, February 11, 1971. See "Mine Institute's Architects Picked." Beckley Post-Herald, April 5, 1971. See ""Mine Academy's Builders Named." Beckley Post Herald, May 21, 1971. See also "Decision Pending on Mine Academy Course." Raleigh Register, May 11, 1971. See also "Mine Academy Sets 18-Month Courses." Beckley Post Herald, May 24, 1971.

7. "Federal Mine Health, Safety Academy Begins Instructing Here Tuesday." Raleigh Register, September 3, 1971. See also "First 40 Academy Students Begin 18-Month Training Course," Beckley Post-Herald, September 8, 1971.

8. "Mine Academy Ground Breaking Will Be July 29." Raleigh Register, July 17, 1972. See also "Mine Academy Will Be Vital In Eliminating Catastrophes; Groundbreaking Set Today." Beckley Post-Herald, July 28, 1972.

9. "Mine Academy Groundbreaking Wet But Momentous." Raleigh Register, July 30, 1972. See also Press Release, U.S. Bureau of Mines, Beckley, West Virginia for Release Sunday, July 30, 1972."

10. “Work Under Way On Mine Academy.” Beckley Post-Herald/Raleigh Register, January 27, 1972. See “Mine Academy Construction Supervisor Submits Status Report to Mine Bureau.” Beckley Register and Post Herald, July 21, 1973. See also “Additional Funds Sought for Mine Safety Academy, Beckley Post-Herald, September 23, 1973.

11. “Mine Academy Scale Model on Exhibition .” Raleigh Register, July 31, 1974 See “Mine Academy Design Poses Some Problems.” Beckley Post-Herald, October 2, 1974**. NOTE:** “The General Services Administration establishes policy for and provides economical and efficient management of Government property and records, including construction and operation of buildings…” See:/www.federal register.gov/agencies/general-services-administration (link active June 2016) See also U.S. Mining Enforcement and Safety Administration, National Mine Health and Safety Academy – Enlightened Minds-Safe Mines, Healthy Miners for information about the formation of MESA. Booklet housed in Archives, National Mine Health and Safety Academy.

12. “Byrd Opens Wing of Mine Academy,” Beckley Post Herald/Raleigh Register, April 4, 1976. See also Raleigh County Airport Authority. Classroom Dedication Services, National Mine Health and Safety Academy, April 3, 1976. Program housed in Archives, National Mine Health and Safety Academy.

13. U.S. Department of the Interior News Release, August 11, 1976. “Senator Robert Byrd to Deliver Keynote Address at MESA Academy Dedication in Beckley, WV. “ See “Better Mine Safety Assured at Dedication of New Academy.” Charleston (WV) Gazette, August 18, 1976, p. 6A. See U.S. Mining Enforcement and Safety Administration. “MESA Academy Dedicated.” MESA Messenger, August, 1976. See Byrd, Child. p. 375. See also U.S. Department of the Interior News Release, August 17, 1976. “”Kleppe Says New Mine Health and Safety Academy Will Improve Mining Practices.”

14. “Facility to ‘Help Miners avoid Death’ Dedicated.” Raleigh Register, August 11, 1981. See also MSHA Mining Facility to Help Safety.” Beckley Post-Herald, August 14, 1981.

15. “Academy Training Labs Are A Wizard’s Dream,” MESA Magazine. July/August 1976.

16. Ibid. See also “Mine Simulation Lab Praised By Officials.” Raleigh Register, September 2, 1992. See Byrd, Child, pp. 545-546. See also National Mine Health and Safety Academy. About the Mine Simulation Laboratory. Beaver, WV: The Academy, 1993. Booklet housed in Archives, National Mine Health and Safety Academy.

17. See “Mine Improvement and New Emergency Response Act of 2006 (MINER Act.” Public Law (PL) 109-236 (S2804) http://arlweb.msha.gov/MinerAct/2006mineract.pdf (Link active July 2016.)

History in Pictures

1972 - Academy Faculty

First Graduating Class

Beckley Training Center Offices

Beckley Training Center AV Setup

Beckley Training Center Classroom

July 1972 - Groundbreaking

1973 - Mr. Byrd (right) and Mr. O'Neal view construction

March 1974 - Construction

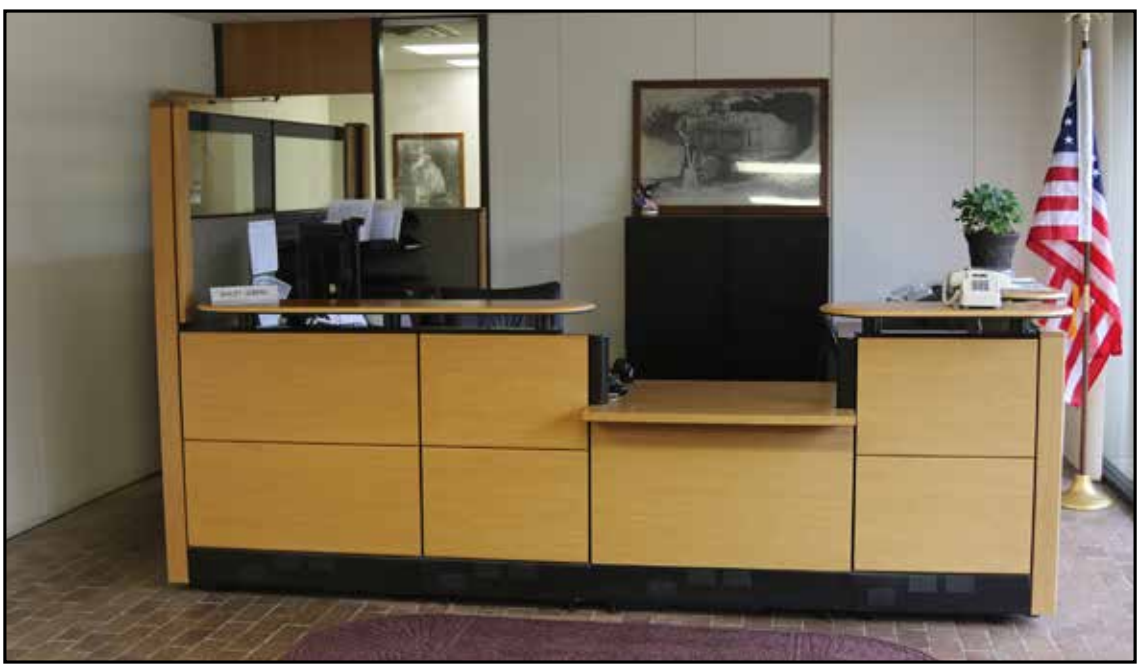
1974-1975 Construction

1976 Faculty

June 1975 - Construction

Reception Area - Then

Reception Area - Now



Faculty Offices - Then

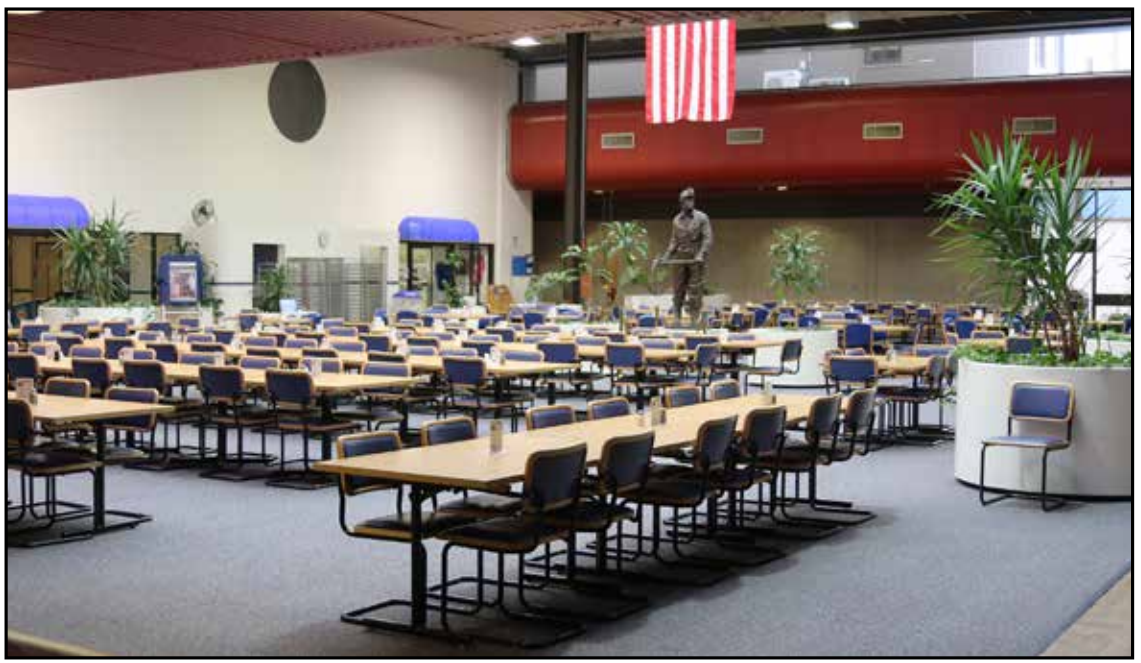
Faculty Offices - Now

Auditorium - Then

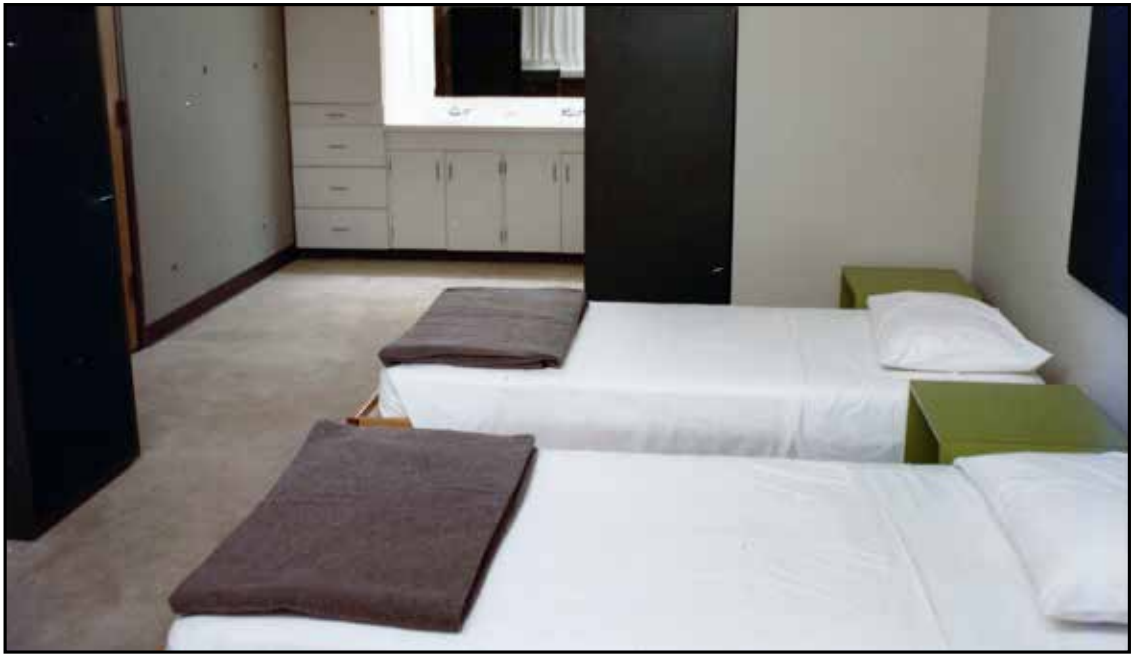
Auditorium - Now

Cafeteria - Then

Cafeteria - Now



Dorm Room - Then



Dorm Room - Now

Classroom - Then

Classroom - Now

Student Street
TV Area - Then

Student Street
TV Area - Now

Library - Then

Library - Now

1974 1976 1981