Operator (Erika...: Welcome to the MSHA Stakeholder conference call. At this time, all participants are in listen-only mode. We will be conducting a question and answer session after the presentation. I'll now turn the meeting over to your host, assistant Secretary Williamson. You may begin.

Assistant Secre...: Good afternoon. This is Assistant Secretary Chris Williamson, and so really appreciate everyone joining us today for another quarterly stakeholder meeting. And I'll just say real quick that, as I've gotten out and attended some different events and speaking engagements, I've gotten some positive feedback about the value of these meetings. And I think they've been well received from those of you that call in and listen. But it also gives us an opportunity to share some information about what we're working on, what we're thinking about, what we're seeing. And I think at the end of the day that communication on both ends is good and leads to overall better miner safety and health, or more protective miner safety and health, put it that way. So I have a few things that I want to walk through and discuss in that vein, just to give you a little walkthrough of the program today, and then as we often do, or as we always do on these stakeholder meetings, we're going to do a review of the fatalities with Marcus Smith, and then Deputy Assistant Secretary Pat Silvey's going to spend some time talking about some enforcement topics and maybe some other things, and then we'll turn it over to Q&A.

So I want to start out with just a reminder that Friday is Workers' Memorial Day, and I think it's very fitting to talk about Workers' Memorial Day in the context of some of the things I'm going to share, and obviously some of the information, and what Marcus is going to spend some time talking about. But Worker's Memorial Day itself is on Friday, but I want to flag or highlight for everyone that the Department of Labor, so MHSA and OSHA, there's an event at DOL at one o'clock tomorrow and there is a live web stream version of it too. So if you have some time tomorrow, I would encourage everyone, if you can't be there in person, to click on the link and watch the program live. I'll be speaking, Assistant Secretary Parker will be speaking. So just really wanted to note Workers' Memorial Day.

And that DOL's going to be having that event tomorrow. And for me, Workers' Memorial Day is an important day on a number of fronts. First and foremost, it's a time to reflect, it's a time to really pay tribute and remember those workers including, in our world, miners who unfortunately lost their lives to an accident in the workplace. I also like to always note and include in that, there are countless workers and miners that we know have also died as a result of occupational illnesses that they've developed because of the work, or what they've been exposed to in the workplace as well. So I think Workers' Memorial Day is also a day to make sure that we're reflecting upon, and remembering those workers as well.

For me personally and a lot of our employees, and the employees at MSHA, it's also a day to reflect on and remember those workers, but it's also a day to remind ourselves and to reflect upon why it is we do the work we do, and why

it's so important, and why Congress created our agency, and why Congress not only gave us our mission to protect miner safety and health, but really set that objective for everyone in the mining industry and was very clear about that, of what's always the first priority and concern, and it's the safety and health of the most precious resource, which is the miner. So for me, Workers' Memorial Day is a day to reflect on that and to recommit, and focus, and acknowledge how important the work is that all of us do to protect miner safety and health.

So that's probably a good segue into the next thing I wanted to talk about. I recently sent out an open letter to the mining community, I hope everyone on the call and everyone on the meeting received it, but if you didn't, it's been shared a number of times on our social media, both Twitter and Facebook. I think it went out on our app. It's certainly on our website. So if you haven't seen it, I would strongly encourage you to take a look at it. And there's a few things I want to highlight that are in the letter, and then have a broader conversation about where the mining industry is at so far this year in terms of safety, really.

One of the reasons I felt strongly about sending the letter was, unfortunately, as you all are well aware, despite last year us seeing an improvement, and that was because of the collective efforts of all in the mining community, we had a reduction in the number of fatalities last year compared to the previous year, and there was a significant reduction in powered haulage fatal accidents, but unfortunately we've not had the start this year that we all would've liked. So 17 miners this year have already lost their lives in accidents. And so 13 fatalities have occurred in metal, non-metal, and four in coal. Is that correct, Marcus? That sounds right?

Marcus Smith: Yes.

Assistant Secre...: Okay, I just want to make sure. And as I said, that number is 17 too many, and I think we can all agree on that. And these issues are important to all of us, and I'm going to spend a little bit of time talking a little bit about it. I'm going to save, and hopefully don't preempt anything Marcus is going to share with you, but we'll spend a little bit of time talking about it, what MSHA's doing about it really. And if there was one takeaway to take from the open letter that I sent to the entire mining community, it was that we're asking your help in terms of trying to identify and eliminate hazards that we know that can cost miners their lives. And one of the things that I've been saying, and I think we all know from throughout history and the years of all of us working together is, we all do better at protecting miner safety and health when we all work together. And it's a common goal that we all share, and we get better results, and miners are safer and healthier if we work together. And that's certainly one of the big takeaways and messages that was included in the letter, and that I'm sharing with everyone that's on the phone call here today.

So that's a little bit of a lead into that. As I said, 17 fatalities so far that the mining industry's experienced this year, 13 in metal, non-metal, and four in coal. And Deputy Assistant Secretary Silvey, I think, will talk a little bit more about

this as we get farther in the program. But one of the things I want to underline and underscore to make clear is, although we've seen more metal and non-metal fatal accidents to date so far this year, this isn't just a metal, non-metal issue, and it's going to take all of us thinking about and working together on this. But even on the coal side, we continue to discover conditions and hazards that we know can cause explosions, and fires, and we know from history can cause disasters that can lead to numerous fatalities. And we all have work to do to reverse this alarming trend that troubles all of us. And like I said, I think when we work together, miners are safer and healthier as a result.

Just to hit some broad highlights, and like I said, Marcus is going to talk more about this, but I looked at this right before the meeting, and if I get it wrong, Marcus, you correct me, but so far, six of those fatal accidents are classified as machinery, three are powered haulage and three are electrical. And so I want to note that. Some of the accidents have involved vehicle collisions, electrocutions, falls from elevated surfaces, equipment rollovers, and drowning among others. And without getting into too much because I want to save this from Marcus, in looking through some of them and some of the early analysis that we've done, it's a lot of the same things that we've spent a lot of time talking about, and Marcus has talked about over and over again during these meetings and calls, and we've all spent a lot of time thinking about. And I think we just need to think about them more, and think about how we can get this information out into the mining community to do what we all want to do, which is prevent these things from reoccurring.

But just to give you an idea of some of the things that we've already seen so far this year is inadequate or lack of proper workplace examinations. Examinations are so important because that's a way to identify potential hazards that put miners at risk, and to not only identify them but address them and remove them from the workplace. And that's a really important way to keep miners not just safer but also healthier too. Training, we keep seeing training is an issue. PPE continues to be an issue. And one of the ones I was going to highlight and underscore, and I know this is something I've had some conversations recently at some of the conferences and things I've been attending and speaking at is, we've seen in a number of these, the miner had one year or less of experience at the mine where the accident occurred. So those are just some commonalities are some things I wanted to highlight that we've seen, and Marcus will talk a little bit more about it.

So what is MSHA doing about it? To be clear, the ultimate responsibility for miner safety and health always remains with the mine operator, and the Act's very clear about that. But I also want to be clear that MSHA's not just going to sit by and watch the number continue to grow without using the tools that Congress gave us to do something about this troubling trend of fatalities. Like I said, I sent out the open letter and really the theme of it is, let's all work together to do better and have the rest of the year be better than where it started. One of the things that I announced in the letter and wanted to talk a little bit more about is, we're going to be initiating an annual stand down to

save lives. And this year it's going to occur on May 17th. As I said in the letter, I really encourage everyone on the call here today to join us in setting aside some time during that week to give some additional focus to safety and health, and the safety and health of our nation's miners. And we're going to share some information, an online toolkit and resources, and we'd really appreciate it if you'd help us amplify our message.

One of the other things I just wanted to note too, and you may have noticed already, but MSHA's increased the number and the frequency with which we're putting out fatality alerts and safety and health alerts. And that's another example of using one of the tools that Congress gave us to better protect miner safety and health. And I've cited as an example, and I think we may have talked about this a little bit at the last meeting maybe, maybe not, but there were a couple fatal electrocution accidents that involved trucks and beds getting into power lines and those happened in pretty close proximity to one another in very similar factual circumstances. And obviously those things, as every fatal accident MSHA investigates, and there'll be a report. But beyond that, what could we do to try to prevent something like that from happening again, which is what we all want to do?

So we pretty quickly put together a safety alert and shared it widely, in both English and Spanish. And I think that was important, and I think we're going to continue to do that. MSHA personnel are going to continue to share information like that when they visit mine sites, and we're going to continue to identify trends, and areas, and areas of concern, and issue safety and health alerts in that respect. We're going to continue to talk about trends and things that we see on meetings and phone calls like this, and all the different areas where we do stakeholder engagement. And there's a lot of ways that we can do, but MSHA also will consider additional and appropriate enforcement as necessary, and we're going to use every tool that we have in the toolbox to try to do our part in reducing the number of fatal accidents that are occurring so far.

Just to touch on a couple other things real quick, and then turn it over to Marcus. I was recently at an event and spoke with a group, and I got shared an anecdote with me that a large training had occurred and they'd asked a question with a number of people, and not one person, or maybe few people knew what pattern of violations is. And it's something that I'm talking more about and want to spend just at least a few minutes talking about that on this just to make sure that people know what it is, it's a provision of the Mine Act, it's been there since the '77 Act was put in place. We have a regulation that was put in place after the Upper Big Branch Mine Disaster. So nothing's changed on MSHA's end in terms of pattern violations. Our regulation requires us to run a screening at least once a year, and the agency does that, which it screens every mine in the country. So last year, for the first time in eight years, we ran our screening and there was a mine that came up on. And for the first time in eight years, we issued a notice, a POV notice to a mine.

I mentioned earlier that provision's been in there since 1977 and the Act was put in place, and Congress put that authority in the Mine Act for a reason. And MSHA is not going to hesitate to use it to protect miners when operators demonstrate a disregard for their safety and health. I mean, that's why Congress put that provision in the Act. But relatedly, it's my opinion that no mind should ever get placed on a POV. MSHA has both POV and S&S calculators that are on our website, any point in time a mine operator can use those tools to see what their compliance record is, to see whether or not they're approaching or satisfying one of the criteria that's used in the screening. So in my opinion, no mine should ever get put in that position.

But the thing that I want to really underscore talking about POV is, if a mine operator does find itself approaching some of the criteria, or meeting some of the criteria, I cannot stress enough how important it is to reach out and work with the districts on a corrective action program. And it may work out to where the districts are actually the ones reaching out to the mine operators, but either way, those are conversations that should be taking place and happening. And the corrective action programs are incredibly important. And we have guidance on our website about what are some of the guidelines, what should be we call a bonafide cap. And one of the hallmarks of that is focusing on reducing S&S violations. And if a mine operator is approaching satisfying the screening criteria, or if we run our screening and they come up during the screening, if they have one of these corrective action programs in place, and they've been able to demonstrate that progress has been made there, we can consider that a mitigating circumstance.

And I just want to say that we've seen a growing number of mines who are proactively implementing these corrective action programs and district offices will work with mine operators to address these compliance issues on the front end without even having to get to the point of being worried about being placed on a pattern of violation. And really this issue doesn't affect the vast majority of mine operators or mines that operate in this country, but as I said, it's incredibly important for those that are approaching some of the criteria, or are concerned about it, to really think hard about these corrective action programs and reach out and work with the districts.

So the last thing I just want to mention real quick, well two things real quick. You may have seen that MSHA's resumed doing monthly impact inspections. We put out a press release last month that covered January and February, and you can be on the lookout for one that's going to be coming out soon that covers the month of March. And I'll just say that these impact inspections, we've uncovered serious violations with them, and they demonstrate that they still remain an important enforcement tool to address safety and health issues at mines with poor compliance histories. And some of the things that we've identified in these impact inspections are some of the same issues that come up, and that I raised earlier in talking about things we've identified as root causes in fatality investigations and reports. Failure to conduct adequate workplace examinations, miners not wearing potentially lifesaving equipment,

miners not receiving required training, improper maintenance of equipment. And I'll just say one of the things that's been very concerning to me is continuing to find and site where mine operators failed to comply with MSHA approved plans. And so I'll just say that we're going to continue to conduct these impact inspections on an ongoing monthly basis and sharing what we found.

I guess lastly, and I don't know if we'll get a question about it or not, but I'll just go ahead and say what I can say. I know there's a lot of people interested in our proposed silica rule and there's not a whole lot I can say at this point other than it's still going through the inter-agency review process, and the last regulatory agenda had a proposed date of April 2023, and as you know, we're getting close to the end of the month. So I guess what I'll say is we'll have more to say and more to share on that hopefully at some point in the near future, but that's where it's at. And obviously we'll have a lot to talk about once the proposed rule comes out and really, as I've said over and over again, want the entire mining community to read it and provide comment and we'll take those seriously as we continue to work through the rule making process.

So that was a long introduction from me, so I'm going to stop there and turn it over to Marcus.

Marcus Smith: Thank you, Chris. As Chris said, my name is Marcus Smith, and I'm the Chief of Accident Investigations in the MSHA Office of Enforcement. As Chris mentioned, we've had 17 accidents this year. Since we had our last stakeholder call on January the 25th, I've been asked to cover the 14 fatalities that occurred since that time. So I'm going to start out by discussing some stats, then move on to some specific accidents and talk about best practices.

And these accidents were picked because of accident classifications where we've had several fatalities and unsafe conditions, like Chris mentioned, that we are seeing on a repeated basis, things that we identified during our investigations that are contributing to fatal accidents. So looking at the stats beginning on slide two, if we look at accident classifications for these 14 fatalities, we see that machinery, electrical, and powered haulage lead the way. As you know, for the 17 fatalities that we've had extra numbers in those categories, machinery, electrical and powered haulage. And electrical normally in recent past hasn't been toward the top, so that's very significant. As Chris mentioned, we put out a safety alert to highlight the hazards and what happened in those instances. And so we definitely want to take note of that, the best practices, and I'll cover that a little bit later in my presentation today. But that safety alert is on our website and that's something that we should take note of.

Going to slide three. If we look at job titles, we see that nine of the 14 or 64% were equipment operators, bulldozer operators, truck drivers, excavator operators. That was the leading category for job titles. And weaving in all of these things that we're talking about, training examinations, all of these things, we need to take these things into account to protect all miners and especially

these ones where we see that the numbers are really high. Like I said, nine of the 14, 64%, are equipment operators.

As it was mentioned before, we have a large number of fatalities at our surface metal, non-metal operations. However, as Mr. Williamson mentioned, the conditions and practices that we're seeing don't just stop at metal, non-metal mines. We need to make sure at all mines metal, non-metal, coal mines, that we are following up on the best practices, the corrective actions, the root causes, the things that we need to do to prevent these accidents, injuries, keep miners safe.

Moving to slide five, activity experience. We've talked about this in previous stakeholder calls, activity experience and experience at the mine, because those categories really jump out to us, and I know to you as well, when we look at the experience level of miners that are fatally injured. On this slide we see, if we look at two years or less at the activity, miners that had two years or less experience at the activity they were performing when they were fatally injured, we see that number is eight of the 14, 57%. So once again, those miners, unfortunately, a lot of times lead this category in those that are fatally injured, and that's an area that we need to pay particular attention. Moving to slide six, as I just mentioned, experience at the mine. And if we again look at two years or less, we see a very large number of those 14 fatalities, 12 out of 14 had two years or less experience at the mine. That's 86%, a very large number of those 14 fatalities.

So going a little bit deeper into this issue on slide seven, nine of the 14 victims had less than one year of experience at the mine where the accident occurred. On the slide that we just looked at, we said 12 of the 14 had two years or less. But if we look at one year or less, that was nine of the 14, still an extremely high number. And the second bullet just again covers the slide that we previously looked at, eight of the 14, two years or less at the experience. So the MSHA requirements are at the bottom of this slide, and we really wanted to highlight this because we're familiar with these sections in the 30 CFR, it's very important to follow the detailed requirements of these standards. When you look at new miner training, newly hired experienced miner training, task training, they're not just titles, each of them has very specific requirements that must be met in order to provide that training in a manner that complies with the 30 CFR.

So in order to do that training, to do that training in an effective way, in an adequate way, we need to pay attention to the detailed requirements in each of those sections of law. Site specific hazard awareness training, annual refresher training, and when we perform fatal accident investigations, we look carefully into that. We look carefully into the training, what the victim was actually trained to do, what was actually covered. So that's something that we find stands out to us frequently and to our investigators. So that's something that we want to get right on the front end, as Mr. Williamson mentioned, to prevent these fatal accidents.

Moving to slide eight, examinations, as was previously mentioned, and the investigations are ongoing, but based on currently available information, in nine of the 14 fatalities that I'm covering, mine operators either did not conduct an examination or conducted an inadequate examination. And we just talked about training, now we're talking about examinations, two key aspects that need to be in place, and they need to be in place adequately to protect miners and to keep miners safe and healthy. Once again, requirements, workplace examinations before miners began working in that place, coal mines, pre-shift, on shift, supplemental, weekly examinations. And once again, like I said, for training, each of those standards has very specific things that must be done, very specific things that must be looked for, and then very specific actions that must be taken if hazards are found. It's so important that we read those standards, understand exactly what they mean, everything that's called for, and then follow that and implement that, implement a program at the operation to make sure that those things are complied with.

Pre-operational inspections of equipment, I'll talk about this a little bit later, but that's a big one that comes up quite frequently. It's checking out equipment, doing those pre-operational checks before equipment is used. Examining roof and ground conditions, examinations of electrical equipment, that's something that we really want to work together with you on to ensure that those are being done, they're being done adequately, and that is these examinations.

So going to move on to slide nine, and talk a little bit about some specific accidents and best practices. As we've mentioned before, we have three electrical accidents that resulted, or three fatalities, excuse me, in two electrical accidents, and then we have a close call here, a near miss, if you will, on this slide. So for the of accidents on January the 27th, two haul truck drivers were electrocuted after an overhead power line came in contact with their haul trucks. They exited the cabs of their haul trucks and came into contact with the electrical energy. And then on February the sixth, a haul truck driver raised the truck bed into an overhead power line. This driver exited the truck to extinguish a fire on the truck's tire, and then when he tried to reenter the truck, the frame of the truck had become energized by the downed power line, and when he tried to reenter the truck, he was electrocuted. Those three miners died on January the 27th and February the sixth.

So on the picture on the right, that's the near fatal, or near miss, that I was just talking about. That occurred a few days ago, on April 19th, a haul truck struck a communication wire, which when it was pulled, broke the power pole. This caused the energized power lines to fall onto the truck. Now, in this case, the driver stayed in the cab, and was not injured. So that's something to keep in mind and it's very, very important.

So if I go just to slide number 10, if I skip the first three just for a second, if your truck boom or mast contact an overhead power line, remain inside the vehicle, call for emergency personnel, inform others to stay away, only exit the truck if it's on fire. But if you do have to exit, jump away from the truck landing with

both feet. Don't touch the truck and the ground at the same time, and shuffle your feet together as close as possible for about 30 feet away as you move away from the truck. That's due to the fact that with the downed power line, it's energized the truck, which can also energize a portion of the ground around the truck, and you need to move away from that safely. If you step, then you can actually have a different potential between your feet. But looking at the first three best practices, it didn't make sense, don't stage, park, or position trucks, cranes, or other equipment under overhead power lines. Post warning signs, establish safe approaches, create safe zones for raising and lowering truck beds, booms, and masts.

Now moving to slide 11, on March 22nd, we had a powered haulage fatality. A miner died when the personnel carrier he was riding in overturned. This miner happened to be... There was a driver, there was a passenger, there's a two person personnel carrier, but the victim was sitting on the platform behind the seats as a third passenger. So he was not riding in a designated seating area. As they were going uphill, the passenger in the passenger seat accidentally hit the emergency stop button. And since this vehicle is powered by electrical battery power, hitting the emergency stop button cut the electrical power to the electric motor, the vehicle starts to roll backwards, and they lose control. The victim, I mean the vehicle hits the coal [inaudible] and overturned, causing fatal injuries to the victim.

Moving to slide 12, best practices, maintain steering and breaking components. And the second bullet, we see pre-operational examinations again. We just talked about that, how that's important to do to make sure that equipment is safe before it's operated. We've seen the third bullet often, where equipment, when we do our investigation and we learn that the equipment was not safe before it was used, and should have been tagged out, should have been removed from service. It's also important not to exceed the designed capacity of the personnel carriers and to operate them at speeds that are consistent with roadway conditions and task training. We talked about that before. So I want to highlight that again. Ensuring that miners are properly, and completely, and adequately task trained with equipment before they operate that equipment.

On slide 13, February the 26th of this year, we had a machinery fatality. A contract miner died while operating a bulldozer. The intention was to tram this bulldozer to a location where they would want to use it to perform some work. But to do that, they had to, or they decided to remove a barricade along a road. And the barricade was in place because approximately half of the road had it fallen away. And so when they removed the barricade and this victim driver was backing the bulldozer up to smooth out the road where the barricade was removed, and backed over the edge of this road that had already been damaged. Investigators found that this bulldozer was equipped with rollover protection, but the miner was not wearing a seatbelt.

So moving to slide 14, we see the best practices, number one, we said this many times before as well, wear a seatbelt while operating mobile equipment. Proper,

and complete, and thorough ground condition examinations are also important. We talked earlier about examinations before beginning work and as ground conditions warrant during the shift. Operate equipment safely to identify and report hazards, and being aware of your position, being aware of your location, especially as it relates to edges of roadways and benches.

As I get ready to conclude, I want to talk a little bit about an accident that we had last year in November. And it goes back to talking about accidents where we're seeing things happen over and over again. We had an engulfment fatality in November of last year where a young man, 21-year-old miner, who was engulfed in a coal stockpile. His job was to load coal onto the grizzly. So, many of you know that the grizzly is where the coal or material that's put on top of it feeds, by gravity, through the grizzly onto typically a belt conveyor below that. And this accident highlights hazards that we see over and over again in fatal accidents, people or equipment over or on top of material that's over the top of the grizzly, so that if you have a void under the surface where the people or equipment are positioned, they fall through.

Also, this fatality highlights material that is stockpiled too high and/or material not at its natural angle of repose. And if it's not at its natural angle of repose, it's always susceptible to sloughing, or to falling, and engulfing miners who are exposed to those hazards. But in this fatal accident, the coal was stockpiled approximately 14 feet high along both sides of a narrow travel way above the grizzly, with no separation. And this was a coal shed at a cement plant, and there was basically no separation. The light in that area wasn't working, so you couldn't really see what was going on. There was no other indication of the grizzly beneath the coal that was stockpiled really high. And so the whole situation, the whole condition was just conducive to the occurrence of this fatal accident. So we just wanted to go over that one, even though that occurred last year because we've been seeing these engulfment fatalities where the hazards are very similar.

So at this point in time, I will turn it over to Mrs. Silvey.

Deputy Assistan...: Thank you, Marcus. As Assistant Secretary Williamson said at the outset, what I'm going to address is what are some of the things we are seeing in coal. But what I will say is that some of the things I'm going to mention, while they can be unique to coal, some of them can be applicable to any type of mining commodity. And the first thing I was going to say was powered haulage, I'm just going to say that and be through with it, because I know you all have heard a lot about powered haulage. And the second thing I'm going to say is some of the things on here may be a little bit redundant of what Assistant Secretary Williamson said and Marcus said, but please indulge me, and so therefore I'm going to try to go quicker. And I have a tendency to talk fast anyway, and so at the end, as usual, if you all have any questions you can ask them.

So I was going to say that, as I said, pay attention to basics, and that includes lockout tagout. You heard Assistant Secretary Williamson Williamson talk about

PPE, personal protective equipment, make sure it's available, miners are trained in how to use it and when to use it. Training, I know you've heard Marcus and Assistant Secretary Williamson talk about training, but we can't overemphasize training, to be honest about it. I think we can talk about training every hour of every day. Make sure miners are trained in the task to be done, and make sure they know the mining environment. And we call that site-specific hazard awareness training, as you all know.

I want to highlight some basic principles that you teach. I'm sure all of you who are coal operators and coal miners on this call, and association, all of you teach at the very beginning of your mining career, perform all required examinations and make sure they are performed by qualified and certified persons. Make sure those qualified and certified people are qualified, no pun intended. Make sure all plans are adequate and up to date. And by that I mean, make sure that they reflect changing mining conditions. Don't take shortcuts. For particularly hazardous activities, be very vigilant and careful. I'm just going to highlight a few longwall moves, extended cuts, retreat mining, any equipment moves. Also in filling voids in roofs, follow the manufacturer's instruction relative to the materials to be used, and how they are used. For surface mines, be aware of any hazard that might be created while performing work activities.

New technology is real important in mining, as we've seen over the many years I've been in mining. And it can enhance safety. I'm just going highlight one area for coal mining and that's proximity detection. Make sure miners are trained on new technology. The one example, as I said, is proximity detection. I recall when we rolled out the proximity detection [inaudible] rule at MSHA, I recall the day we did it at the gypsum mine. And I was talking to the continuous mining machine operator, excuse me, but once you put new technology on a piece of equipment, that adds another element of task training. Make sure all miners affected by that technology are trained in the use of that technology. And equally as important, don't defeat the technology because then you are undermining it.

Now I'm going to talk a few minutes about health. As mentioned with safety, don't take shortcuts with health. Take all required sampling. If they are overexposures, take corrective action as soon as possible. Make changes to the plan, make required changes to the plan as appropriate. I'm going to mention here a little bit the Silica Enforcement Initiative. We've clarified it, and maybe some of you saw that clarification, because the clarified Silicon Enforcement Initiative is on the website and it's on the provision dealing with the spot inspection. In addition to 103(i) Spot Inspection, we've clarified that inspectors will take spot inspections where warranted in cases of repeated overexposures to silica. I will mention that we have added two coal mines to 103(i) Spot Inspections for repeated over exposures to silica.

Now I'm going to talk a minute about mine rescue teams, which I'm always happy to talk about. Mine rescue teams are a necessary and important element for underground coal mines, underground mines, but the requirements are a

little more stringent for underground coal mine. And that was what I was supposed to be sticking to, you all know. I always analogize mine rescue team members to veterans. And I will say, for all of you who have either been on a team, or are a member of the team now, or thinking about being a member of a team, well no, being on a team or a member of a team, thank you for your service. There's no greater service one can give, in my humble opinion, to your fellow miner than being on a mine rescue team, and being capable, and available, and able to answer the call in case of an emergency, no matter what that emergency is, and no matter how dangerous it is.

And there are many positive elements associated with mine rescue team membership, team building, leadership skills, enhanced communication. And we want to say, on behalf of Assistant Secretary Williamson and all of us here in this room, that we support mine rescue teams and what mine rescue team means to safe and health and money wholeheartedly. And we want you to know that. We recently met with the Holmes Mine Rescue Association, and we conveyed that to them. And the last thing I'd like to say, for those of you who are interested in maybe looking at being a member, we encourage you to seek further, to look further. You may end up finding out that you like being a member of a mine rescue team, so we encourage you to do that.

The last thing I will say is that you all know we have a number of alliances, some of them are on our website. Recently, first time really, as I said recently, but for the first time, signed that alliance with women in mining. And I forget what date, I should remember the date. I don't remember the date.

Speaker X: During Women's History Month, it was in March.

Deputy Assistan...: It was March, thank you, sir. It was during Women's History Month, and we were very pleased and happy to do that. There were a number of provisions in there, which I just highlight because each... When we do those alliances, we have a number with you all on the phone, and you know they are mutually beneficial to both of us. And we have provisions in there that enhance safety and health, and such as it was with the one on women in mining. And the last thing I would add is they the Women in Mining Association has had its first advisory council meeting, and I was pleased to attend that first advisory council meeting.

And I will say one thing there, that that alliance has a provision on it that they, we will work mutually together to improve diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the mining community. And we were pleased that they came to us with that. But we appreciated that too because that is one of our goals. And I think that's it. I hope I got through it fairly quickly. Thank you all.

And so that's it. And now I guess we'll open it up to questions, and we'll have the answer. I said questions-

Operator (Erika...: If you would like to ask a question, please press *0 on your telephone keypad now. An operator will take your name and place you into the queue in the order received. Once again, if you would like to ask a question, please press *0 on your phone now. One moment.

Once again, to ask a question, please press *0 now.

At this time we have no questions.

Assistant Secre...: Well, this is Assistant Secretary Williamson, and I'll just say, I don't know if any have come in the few seconds or minute or so since we surveyed, but I'll just reiterate that I really appreciate everyone joining us today. I think we covered a lot of topics, and were able to talk and share a lot of information. And just want to underscore again that there's been a troubling number of fatalities so far this year, and I'm really hopeful, and I know a lot of people on this call are going to help us work on getting that number lower. So just really appreciate everyone joining on, and if there are no questions, we'll go ahead and end the call.

Operator (Erika...: This concludes today's meeting. Thank you for joining.

Deputy Assistan...: Thank you.

Speaker X: Thank you all.

Assistant Secre...: Thank you.