



# News Release

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## **MSHA honors the contributions of miners, past and present** *National Miners Day on Dec. 6 recalls America's worst mine disaster*

**ARLINGTON, Va.** – On Dec. 6, the U.S. Department of Labor's [Mine Safety and Health Administration](#) marks [National Miners Day](#), designated by Congress to honor the contributions and sacrifices of miners, both past and present. The date commemorates the worst industrial mine accident in American history when 362 miners perished in an [explosion](#) at the No. 6 and No. 8 mines in Monongah, West Virginia, on this date in 1907.

Today, nearly 375,000 miners extract almost 100 different kinds of minerals from the earth, including coal, gold, copper, silver, granite, limestone, granite, salt and gravel. All of these mined materials play critical roles in the quality of American lives. Coal, and the electricity generated by coal power, heat and power our homes, businesses and communities. Miners produce the gravel, crushed stone, tar, asphalt, road salt and cement beneath our nation's highways. Bridges that span canyons and rivers are built with ores, rock and mineral products extracted by miners.

Gold, silver and copper wiring, ceramic insulators, and silicon processing and memory chips are essential to the smartphones, computers, televisions and other electronics we use daily. Thousands of other common consumer goods, from cosmetics to toothpaste and from cookware to dinnerware, exist thanks to the hard work of miners.

“Miners and mining are vital to our economy,” said [Joseph A. Main](#), assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health. “But even more, they are a key part of our nation's identity, representing fortitude, determination and spirit.

“It is MSHA's mission to see that those who choose to be a miner have the opportunity to go to work, put in their shift and return home each and every day, safe and healthy. They are the mining industry's most precious resource,” he said.

Among recent and ongoing efforts by MSHA to protect miners' health and safety is the implementation of the new [respirable coal dust rule](#) aimed at preventing black lung disease; and outreach initiatives such as fall protection, guarding and ladder safety for metal and nonmetal miners. Enhanced enforcement activities such as monthly impact inspections, the [pattern of violations program](#), and [miners' voice in the workplace](#) have led to improved compliance and a decrease in violations.

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Secretary of Labor Thomas Perez and MSHA Assistant Secretary Joseph Main observe a piece of coal mining machinery at the Cumberland Mine in Greene County, Pennsylvania.

Earlier this week, [Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez](#) made his first mine visit, touring Cumberland Mine in Greene County, Pennsylvania. “I was moved by the enormous pride these men and women have in their work,” said Perez. “One miner told me what it meant to work in the same place as his father. I gained a greater appreciation for the way that mining defines families and communities; it’s an heirloom that bonds one generation to the next.”

Learn more about the contributions of miners at [www.msha.gov/minersday](http://www.msha.gov/minersday).

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**Media Contacts:**

Amy Louviere, 202-693-9423, [louviere.amy@dol.gov](mailto:louviere.amy@dol.gov)

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