

# Adding a Joseph A. Holmes Mine Rescue Association - Proposed Changes to the Joseph A. Holmes Constitution

...details inside



**JAHSA**  
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The Mine Safety and Health Administration and Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association Bulletin contains safety articles on a variety of subjects: fatal accident abstracts, studies, posters, and other health and safety-related topics. This information is provided free of charge and is designed to assist in presentations to groups of mine and plant workers during on-the-job safety meetings. For more information, visit the MSHA home page at [www.msha.gov](http://www.msha.gov)

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# Rationale for Changes to the Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association's Constitution and By-laws

On May 16, 1910, Congress created the U.S. Bureau of Mines, a government agency within the Department of the Interior. Pub. L. No. 61-179, § 2 (1910). The purpose of the Bureau was to improve safety in mining through the investigation of mining methods and equipment and training, and therefore prevent accidents and health problems. The first director of the Bureau was Dr. Joseph A. Holmes. He standardized mine rescue and first aid procedures by providing training in these areas, including the initial First Aid and Mine Rescue Contest held in 1911. He demonstrated the explosibility of coal mine dust, arranged for self-contained breathing devices to be imported into the United States for use in mine rescue, and initiated training for the use of these devices in mine rescue situations.

In 1916, in order to continue the work of Joseph A. Holmes, 24 organizations including three federal agencies created the Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association. These agencies were the Bureau of Mines, the Geological Survey, and the Public Health Service. The group's constitution named the director of the Bureau, ex officio, as the president of the organization. The first vice president was secretary of the American Mining Congress (now the National Mining Association) and the second vice president was president of the AFL-CIO. There was also a board of directors consisting of certain officers and others elected by the membership of the organization. In about 1920 and at the suggestion of the Bureau, Joseph A. Holmes' board of directors created an entity known as the Holmes Safety Association – a loose federation of district or state councils, and local chapters organized to continue the work of Dr. Holmes at the local level by providing training and educational opportunities to miners and the mining industry. The Holmes

Safety Association was later merged with Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association in 2001.

In 1926, Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association incorporated itself in Washington, D.C. as a nonprofit corporation with no power to issue stock. The newly incorporated Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association provided two classes of membership: the first class consisted of members of national organizations such as the American Mining Congress and the AFL-CIO, and the three original federal government agencies mentioned above; the second class consisted of delegates of the Holmes Safety Association which was the entity representing state and district councils and local chapters of miners and mine operators.

Throughout its history, Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association has organized and coordinated local chapters, district or state councils, and a national council. Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association has no employees. The organizing of local chapters has traditionally been initiated by Federal employees. The Bureau of Mines initiated the idea of local chapters to assist it in furthering education on mining first-aid and rescue methods. Local chapters were organized after the training was completed by the Bureau employees.

The purpose of these proposed changes to Constitution and By-Laws of the Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association is to go back to the roots and the original purpose of the Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association. The changes involve:

- Having two organizations under the Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association – the Holmes Safety Association and the Holmes Mine Rescue Association.

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- » The Holmes Safety Association would continue with current structure of local chapters, state and district councils, and a National Council. This structure is very similar to the original structure of the Holmes Safety Association.
- » The Holmes Mine Rescue Association has a structure similar to the original Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association with a National Council, an Executive Committee, and a membership body.
- Having two organizations focusing on the original purpose safety training: one at the local level and one at the national level.
- A General Secretary providing guidance and oversight of both branches of the Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association.
  - » The General Secretary's duties are to meet with both branches at least once a year and appoint the Secretary for both branches.
  - » The Assistant Secretary of Labor for Mine Safety and Health will appoint the General Secretary. Unlike the original Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association, where the Head of the Federal Mining Agency (Bureau of Mines (BOM), Mining Enforcement and Safety Administration (MESA), and Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA)) was the President of the Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association, this new structure has provided a different role.
- The new branch, Holmes Mine Rescue Association, having a similar structure – National Council, officers, and an Executive Committee – to the original organization which operated at the national level.
  - » For the Holmes Mine Rescue Association, the branch will have up to sixty-seven members on the Executive Committee including the officers of the National Council, which are the President, the Treasurer, the Secretary, and 12 Vice-Presidents.
- » The membership of the Executive Committee includes a Vice-President, except the interest group that the President is representing, and up to four representatives from the following interest groups: (a) coal management, (b) metal and nonmetal management, (c) state entities for coal mines, (d) state entities for metal and nonmetal mines, (e) coal mine rescue trainers, (f) metal and nonmetal mine rescue trainers, (g) coal mine rescue team members, (h) metal and nonmetal mine rescue team members, (i) federal agencies – coal mines, (j) federal agencies – metal and nonmetal mines, (k) labor – coal mines, (l) labor – metal and nonmetal mines, and (m) vendors, manufacturers, suppliers or insurance groups, academia, and contractors.
- » The interest group structure is the same as the original Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association and the proposed branch, Holmes Safety Association, except that for the Holmes Mine Rescue Association, the interest groups were further refined to the interest in coal or metal and nonmetal mines.
- » Unlike the other branch (the Vice-Presidents rotate from fourth VP to the Presidency), the Vice-Presidents for Holmes Mine Rescue Association will vote biennially for the President among the elected Vice-Presidents.
- » All elected officers and members of the Executive Committee will serve for a two-year term and the election of the President occurs at the National Council meeting before the second year of the Vice-Presidents' terms.
- The MSHA Administrators for Coal and Metal and Nonmetal Mine Safety and Health serve as Vice-Presidents for the federal agencies' interest groups. They are not elected. Both these Vice-Presidents may not be elected or serve as the President or in the absence of the

President of the Holmes Mine Rescue Association

- Defining the mission of the Holmes Mine Rescue Association to one of core purposes of the original Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association. The Holmes Mine Rescue Association may
  - » Develop best practices, procedures, and training for the mine rescue capability
  - » Disseminate these guidelines, training, or tools to the mining public
  - » Plan, participate in, sponsor, or provide support to the National Coal or Metal and Nonmetal Mine Rescue Training Contests.

## **CONSTITUTION**

### **ARTICLE 1**

#### **NAME**

#### **Section 1:**

This organization shall be known as the Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association, as stated in its certificate of incorporation filed pursuant to the laws of the District of Columbia, dated the 19th day of February 1926. The duration of this corporation shall be perpetual.

### **ARTICLE II**

#### **PURPOSE SHEET**

#### **Section 1:**

A. The Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association is organized exclusively for charitable, educational and scientific purposes, including, the making of distributions to organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (or the corresponding section of any future Federal tax code).

B. The Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association, in accordance with applicable law, may accept tax deductible contributions from

individuals, corporations and associations in the mineral extractive industries for the purpose of funding any scholarship program established or supported and to support mine rescue training activities.

C. No part of the net earnings of the Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, trustees, directors, officers or other private persons, except that the association shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of Section 501(c)(3) purposes. No substantial part of the activities of the association shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the association shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office.

D. Notwithstanding any other provision of these articles, the Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (1) by a corporation exempt from Federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (or the corresponding section of any future Federal tax code) or (2) by a corporation, contributions to which are deductible under Section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code (or the corresponding section of any future Federal tax code).

E. Dissolution. Upon dissolution of the Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue code (or the corresponding section of any future Federal tax code) or shall be distributed to the Federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose.

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## **ARTICLE III OBJECTIVES**

### **Section 1:**

The object of the Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association, founded in the year nineteen hundred and sixteen, shall be to commemorate and perpetuate the safety efforts of Joseph A. Holmes, the first Director of the Bureau of Mines, United States Department of the Interior, and originator of the slogan "SAFETY FIRST."

### **Section 2:**

The Association promotes the development of safety methods in the mineral-extractive industries, by:

A. Making awards to individual persons, corporations or associations, who originate, develop or install meritorious safety methods, appliances or devices in the mineral-extractive industries;

B. Making awards to operating personnel, companies and others who attain meritorious safety records;

C. Making special awards to individuals in recognition of personal heroism in the face of grave personal risk in saving or attempting to save lives of others in the mineral-extractive industries; and;

D. Establishing and supporting scholarship programs at accredited educational institutions for undergraduate students enrolled in mining technology and mine safety programs and to promote mine rescue training activities.

### **Section 3:**

The Association shall arrange and hold safety meetings, conduct safety campaigns, and provide for organized cooperative effort to

encourage:

A. The prevention of fatalities and injuries and the improvement of the health conditions of all persons connected with mining, metallurgical, petroleum, natural gas, quarrying, and allied industries whether at work, in and about their homes, on public highways, or in public places.

B. The dissemination of information and instruction on subjects related to the promotion of health and safety in the prevention of plant or mine fires, explosions, or disasters from other causes.

C. The promotion of training in first aid, self-contained breathing apparatus, and other forms of protection and rescue and recovery operations.

D. The closest cooperative relations with existing organizations, including labor, management, and state and federal agencies that promote health and safety in the mineral and allied industries.

E. The promotion of educational, social and recreational activities in the mineral and allied industries, including cooperation with local and state school authorities, and other institutions in the advancement of health and safety education.

## **ARTICLE IV PLAN OF ORGANIZATION**

### **Section 1:**

The Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association shall consist of a General Secretary and two branches: the Holmes Safety Association and the Holmes Mine Rescue Association.

### **Section 2:**

The Assistant Secretary of Labor for Mine Safety and Health is authorized to designate the General Secretary for a two-year term.

### **Section 3:**

The Holmes Safety Association shall consist of a National Council, state councils, district councils, and local chapters.

A. State councils may adopt their own by-laws, which shall not conflict with the Constitution or the By-laws of the Holmes Safety Association's National Council, and they shall adopt the name of the state in which they are established. The National Council shall assist and provide oversight of the State councils.

B. District councils may adopt their own by-laws, which shall not conflict with the Constitution or the By-laws of the Holmes Safety Association's National Council or the by-laws of the State council to which it is subordinate. Each district council shall adopt a suitable name. Where a State council exists, it shall assist and provide oversight of the district councils in its State. If no State council exists, the National Council shall render such assistance as is practicable.

C. Local chapters may adopt their own by-laws, which shall not conflict with the constitution or the by-laws of the district or State council to which they are subordinate or the Constitution or By-laws of the Holmes Safety Association's National Council. Each chapter shall adopt a suitable name. Where a district council exists, it shall assist and provide oversight of the local chapters in its territory of the State. If no district council exists, the State council or the National Council shall render such assistance as is practicable.

### **Section 4:**

The Holmes Mine Rescue Association shall consist of a National Council.

## **ARTICLE V JURISDICTION**

### **Section 1:**

State and district councils and local chapters are subject to the policies of the Holmes Safety Association's National Council. The state or district councils or local chapters shall engage in activities stated in Articles II and III only, unless the National Council of the Holmes Safety Association approves the activities. The National Council may decide all disputes submitted to it.

### **Section 2:**

Financial commitments of the local chapters and state and district councils are the sole responsibility of those subordinate units. The Holmes Safety Association's National Council is not accountable for any subordinate unit's funds and shall not direct or control the expenditure of such funds. Each subordinate unit shall be responsible to comply with the laws of the State in which it is located and comply with any federal tax or other laws governing their activities. The tax exempt status of the Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association is not conveyed to any subordinate unit of Holmes Safety Association.

## **ARTICLE VI REVOKING CHARTERS**

### **Section 1:**

The Holmes Safety Association's National Council may revoke a charter of a subordinate unit for cause.

## **ARTICLE VII AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION**

A. Amendment Proposal. The Constitution may be amended by submitting a proposal and supporting rationale to each Branch Secretary by January 31 of each year, or at

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least four months prior to their respective annual National Council meetings. All proposed amendments must include an endorsement by a member of an Executive Committee or receive official support of an Executive Committee. Each Secretary shall send copies of such proposals with a response form to the members of the Executive Committee and officers of their Branch. The response form shall provide a means of showing support for or against the proposal, space for comments, and include a return date to the appropriate Branch Secretary. If at least 20 members of the Holmes Safety Association's Executive Committee and at least 15 members of the Holmes Mine Rescue Association's Executive Committee respond, and plurality of each Branch's responses support the proposal, the Branch Secretaries shall publish the proposal in the Joseph A. Holmes Safety Bulletin at least 60 days before each annual National Council meeting to allow comments from their membership. All comments received will be copied and distributed to the members of each Executive Committee at or before the Executive Committee sessions of the National Council meetings. After any needed discussion, each President shall call for a vote of the Executive Committee. At least 20 members of the Holmes Safety Association's Executive Committee and at least 15 members of the Holmes Mine Rescue Association's Executive Committee must be present in order to hold a vote. If a plurality of each Branch's Executive Committee supports the proposal, the President shall submit the proposal to a membership vote at the Branch's National Council meeting.

**B. VOTING OF THE MEMBERSHIP.** If at least two-thirds of each Branch's membership votes, from members present at their National Council meetings, to approve the proposal, the Constitution is amended. Such results shall be published in the next edition of the Bulletin.

## **BY-LAWS**

### **JOSEPH A. HOLMES SAFETY ASSOCIATION NATIONAL COUNCILS**

#### **Section 1. MEMBERSHIP**

A. Holmes Safety Association. The membership of the National Council for Holmes Safety Association shall consist of authorized representatives of state and district councils and of chapters nonaffiliated with state or district councils of the Association; authorized representatives of management, labor, and state and federal agencies; insurance companies, suppliers, manufacturers, distributors, and others whose work involves promoting objectives consistent with those of the Holmes Safety Association.

B. Holmes Mine Rescue Association. The membership of the National Council for Holmes Mine Rescue Association shall consist of authorized representatives of management, labor, state and federal agencies, mine rescue trainers, mine rescue team members, vendors, manufacturers, suppliers or insurance groups, academia, and contractors, and others whose work involves promoting objectives consistent with those of the Holmes Mine Rescue Association.

#### **Section 2. OFFICERS**

A. Holmes Safety Association. The officers of the National Council for Holmes Safety Association shall consist of a President, first Vice-President, second Vice-President, third Vice-President, fourth Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

B. Holmes Mine Rescue Association. The officers of the National Council for the Holmes Mine Rescue Association shall consist of a President, twelve Vice-Presidents, Secretary, and Treasurer.

### **Section 3. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (REPRESENTATIVES)**

A. Holmes Safety Association. The National Council for Holmes Safety Association officers, together with representatives of participating organizations or representatives from each mining area having active state councils, district councils or chapters, shall constitute the Holmes Safety Association's Executive Committee.

B. Holmes Mine Rescue Association. The National Council for the Holmes Mine Rescue Association may consist of up to sixty-seven Executive Committee members (which includes officers). The Executive Committee shall include a vice-president and up to four representatives from each of the following interest groups:

1. coal mine management,
2. metal and nonmetal mine management
3. labor – coal mines
4. labor – metal and nonmetal mines
5. state – coal mines
6. state – metal and nonmetal mines
7. federal agencies – coal mines
8. federal agencies – metal and nonmetal mines
9. coal mine rescue trainers
10. metal and nonmetal mine rescue trainers
11. coal mine rescue team members
12. metal and nonmetal mine rescue team members
13. vendors, manufacturers, academia, suppliers or insurance groups, and contractors

The interest group that holds the President position will have no vice-president.

C. Members of an Executive Committee who, in the interim of their membership, retire (in good standing) from their position as an

authorized representative of an interest group as specified in Section 12.A shall retain their post as Emeritus Member of the Executive Committee for the remainder of their elected term. Thereafter, such Emeritus Member's status of continued participation on the Executive Committee is welcomed and encouraged as an attendant and voting member and to serve in any capacity so appointed or assigned by the President of the Branch, except for such post which explicitly calls for a duly authorized representative of an interest group as specified in Section 12.A.

### **Section 4. ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

A. Holmes Safety Association. All members (including officers) of the Executive Committee, except the Secretary, are elected annually by a plurality vote of the members present at the annual National Council meeting. On or before March 31 of each year, state councils, district councils, or members of the Executive Committee shall forward to the Secretary a Nomination Form for each person being initially recommended to serve on an Executive Committee. Nominations for members who are currently serving as Executive Committee members may be recommended by statement in lieu of a completed form.

B. Holmes Mine Rescue Association. The Vice-Presidents (except the Vice-Presidents from the Federal Agencies), the Treasurer, and the other members of the Executive Committee are elected by a plurality vote of the members present at the National Council meeting. Before the second year of the Vice-Presidents' terms, the Vice Presidents elect, by a plurality vote of those present at the annual National Council meeting, the President. The President shall designate a Vice-President to assume the duties if the President is unavailable or is not present. If the President

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is permanently incapacitated, a new election will be held. On or before March 31 of the applicable year, members of the Executive Committee shall forward to the Secretary a nomination form for each person initially recommended to serve on the Executive Committee or as an elected Vice-President or Treasurer. Nominations for members who are currently serving as Executive Committee members or elected officers may be recommended by statement in lieu of a completed form.

C. All elected Executive Committee members (which includes officers) shall assume their positions at the conclusion of the annual National Council meeting at which time they were elected. For the Holmes Safety Association, all Executive Committee members shall serve for a period of one year; for Holmes Mine Rescue Association, all Executive Committee members shall serve for a period of two years.

## **Section 5. VACANCIES AND MEETING ABSENCES**

A. The President shall fill through appointment all elected Executive Committee vacancies occurring during an unexpired term, for the remainder of unexpired term.

B. The Executive Committee members must actively participate in the applicable branch of the Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association. Vice-Presidents and Executive Committee members who fail to attend at least two consecutive annual National Council meetings will be contacted by the appropriate Secretary in writing to determine their interest in remaining as a member of an Executive Committee. This matter, including the reason for their absence will be brought before the next scheduled meeting of the Executive Committee to determine if their membership should continue. The Secretary of the applicable Branch will notify individuals of the Executive Committee's decision.

## **Section 6. DUTIES OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES**

A. Holmes Safety Association. The National Council for the Holmes Safety Association, through its officers and members of the Executive Committee, shall assist state councils, district councils, and local chapters. They shall assist in organizing new councils and chapters, disseminating information on the progress of the Holmes Safety Association, providing articles to the Bulletin, and other matters of general interest within the scope of the Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association.

B. Holmes Mine Rescue Association. The National Council for the Holmes Mine Rescue Association, through its officers and members of the Executive Committee, shall meet to develop best practices, procedures, and training for mine rescue capability for emergency responses. They shall disseminate these guidelines, training, or tools, which may include providing articles to the Bulletin. They may plan, participate in, sponsor, or provide support to the National Coal or Metal and Nonmetal Mine Rescue Training Contests.

## **Section 7. GENERAL SECRETARY**

The General Secretary shall meet at least annually with each branch of the Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association, but has no voting rights. The General Secretary shall appoint the Secretary for each branch of the Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association.

## **Section 8. PRESIDENT**

Each President shall call all meetings of each National Council and each Executive Committee and preside at them. Each President shall appoint a nominating committee, a finance committee, an auditing committee and such other committees as deemed necessary for the proper functioning of the National Council, and shall assign duties not otherwise provided for by the By-Laws or Constitution.

## **Section 9. VICE-PRESIDENTS**

A. Holmes Safety Association. The four Vice-Presidents for the Holmes Safety Association shall represent each of the interest groups as specified in Section 12.A.(1) other than that interest group represented by the President. Except for resignations or death, the Vice-Presidents shall rotate from Fourth Vice-President to President, one position each year. Persons elected to fill a vacancy as Vice-President shall be assigned from Fourth Vice-President to President, one position each year. Persons elected to fill a vacancy as Vice-President shall be assigned the Fourth Vice-President's position regardless of how the position vacated. The First Vice-President of the preceding year automatically becomes the nominee for President.

B. Holmes Mine Rescue Association. The twelve Vice-Presidents of the Holmes Mine Rescue Association shall represent each of the interest groups as specified in Section 12.A.(2) other than that interest group represented by the President. The Vice-President for Federal Agencies for Coal mines is MSHA's Administrator for Coal Mine Safety and Health; the Vice-President for Federal Agencies for Metal and Nonmetal mines is MSHA's Administrator for Metal and Non-metal Mine Safety and Health. Before the second year of the elected Vice-Presidents' terms, the Vice-Presidents will elect, by a plurality vote of those present at the annual National Council meeting, the President for a two-year term. The Federal representatives serving as Vice-Presidents will not serve as President.

C. The Vice-Presidents shall assist the President and other officers in conducting the work of the Branch's National Council. In the absence of the President, the highest ranking Vice-President who is present at a meeting shall assume the duties of the Presi-

dent of the Holmes Safety Association. For the Holmes Mine Rescue Association, the President shall designate a Vice-President to assume the duties in the absence of the President.

## **Section 10. SECRETARY**

The Secretary for each branch of the Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association shall be the official contact person for all matters of business and shall provide all official responses to correspondence between meetings. Each Secretary shall notify members of all meetings of the National Council and the Executive Committee; transmit all official communications of the Council; and keep records of all meetings and proceedings of the National Council and Executive Committee. For the Holmes Safety Association, upon application of properly constituted state and district councils and local chapters, the Secretary shall issue all charters under the approved procedures and guidelines of the National Council. The Secretary shall perform such other duties as may be properly assigned by the Executive Committee and the President.

For the Holmes Mine Rescue Association, the Secretary shall attend and evaluate all National Mine Rescue Contests, and provide a written report to the President relative to the overall evaluation of each contest, including recommendations for improvements.

## **Section 11. TREASURER**

The Treasurer for each branch shall receive all funds for its branch of the Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association and shall maintain proper accounting for these funds. Each Treasurer shall pay all obligations of its branch of the Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association which have been properly presented. Annually or as necessary, each Treasurer shall prepare actual and budgeted expenses and the taxes for its branch. The appropriate

Treasurer shall sign all contracts, grants, and any other agreements under the applicable Executive Committees' approved procedures. If the Treasurer is not available, the President (except a Federal representative) for the appropriate branch may sign these agreements. If the President is unavailable, then any Vice-President (except a Federal representative) may sign these agreements. Each Treasurer may recommend the investment of surplus funds and recommend how to allocate budgeted funds to assure fiscal integrity. The President and the Treasurer of each branch may not be representatives of the same interest group or entity.

## **Section 12. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS**

A. Composition. (1) Holmes Safety Association. The Executive Committee for the Holmes Safety Association shall be composed of the following: representatives from each state council, representatives from district councils, at large representatives from each of the interest groups: (a) organized labor, (b) industry management, (c) state enforcement agencies, (d) federal agencies, and (e) manufacturers, suppliers or insurance groups, academia and contractors. (2) Holmes Mine Rescue Association. The Executive Committee for Holmes Mine Rescue Association shall be composed of representatives from the following interest groups: (a) coal management, (b) metal and nonmetal management, (c) labor – coal mines, (d) labor – metal and nonmetal mines, (e) state entities for coal mines, (f) state entities for metal and nonmetal mines, (g) federal agencies – coal mines, (h) federal agencies – metal and nonmetal mines, (i) coal mine rescue trainers, (j) metal and nonmetal mine rescue trainers, (k) coal mine rescue team members, (l) metal and nonmetal mine rescue team members, and (m) vendors, manufacturers,

suppliers or insurance groups, academia, and contractors.

B. Duties – Holmes Safety Association. The Executive Committee shall provide oversight of the Holmes Safety Association and supervise its activities. The Executive Committee shall review and recommend all business before presenting the business to the membership. The President shall call at least one meeting of the Executive Committee before the annual National Council meeting each year at a designated time and place (may be virtual or use other means). The Executive Committee may employ such clerical and other assistants as necessary to carry out the responsibilities and duties of its National Council. The designated time and place of the annual meeting of the National Council will be selected by the President from the appropriate zone as noted in Section 12.E.(1). The President may call other meetings of the Executive Committee as necessary, or at the request of any five members of the Executive Committee, after providing 30 days' notice in writing of a suitable time and place (may be virtual or use other means) to each member of the Executive Committee.

C. Duties – Holmes Mine Rescue Association. The Executive Committee shall provide oversight of the Holmes Mine Rescue Association and supervise its activities. The Executive Committee shall review and approve all business, as possible. The President shall call at least one meeting of the Executive Committee before the annual National Council meeting. The Executive Committee may employ such clerical and other assistants as necessary to carry out the responsibilities and duties of its National Council. The President may call other meetings of the Executive Committee as necessary, or at the request of any five members of the Executive Committee, after providing 30 days' notice in writing of a suitable time and place (may be virtual

or use other means) to each member of the Executive Committee.

D. Quorum For Business. A minimum of twenty members of the Holmes Safety Association's Executive Committee shall be present before any business of the Executive Committee is official. A minimum of fifteen members of the Holmes Mine Rescue Association's Executive Committee shall be present before any business of the Executive Committee is official. This shall not prevent either Treasurer from paying any obligations of its Branch which have been properly presented for payment when a quorum is not available.

E. Selection Of Annual Meeting Site. (1) Holmes Safety Association. In order to reflect the national scope of the Holmes Safety Association, the annual meeting location of the National Council should be rotated among the following four zones listed below. The site location of the annual National Council meeting will be rotated in the following order: Zone 1, Zone 2, Zone 3, and Zone 4. Each year, at the Executive Committee meeting of the annual National Council meeting, representatives from the following four zones may petition the Executive Committee to consider their particular location as a meeting site for the next annual National Council meeting in their particular zone. Should no representative of a particular zone desire to host the next annual meeting, the annual meeting site will be rotated to the next zone.

**ZONE 1**

Mississippi	Louisiana	Arkansas
Florida	Tennessee	South Carolina
Kentucky	West Virginia	Alabama
North Carolina	Virginia	Georgia
D.C.	Maryland	

**ZONE 2**

Washington	Oregon	Idaho
Montana	Wyoming	North Dakota
South Dakota	Nebraska	Minnesota
Iowa	Alaska	Missouri
Wisconsin	Illinois	

**ZONE 3**

Michigan	Indiana	Pennsylvania
Ohio	New Jersey	Delaware
New York	Rhode Island	Massachusetts
Connecticut	New Hampshire	Vermont
Maine		

**ZONE 4**

California	Nevada	Utah
Arizona	New Mexico	Colorado
Kansas	Oklahoma	Texas
Hawaii		

(2) Holmes Mine Rescue Association. At the annual National Council meeting, the Executive Committee and officers will determine the next annual meeting location.

**Section 13. COMMITTEE FORMATION**

A. (1) Holmes Safety Association. The President shall appoint each committee, which shall consist of five members from the Executive Committee, one of whom shall serve as chairperson. Committee members should represent each of the five interest groups: (a) organized labor, (b) industry management, (c) state enforcement agencies, (d) federal agencies, and (e) manufacturers, suppliers or insurance groups, academia and contractors. Representation from each interest group shall be a primary consideration for all committee involvement. (2) Holmes Mine Rescue Association. The President shall appoint each committee, which shall consist of at least, seven members from the Executive Committee, one of whom shall serve as chairperson.

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At least one committee members should represent each of the seven interest groups: (a) management, (b) labor, (c) state entities, (d) federal agencies, (e) mine rescue trainers, (f) mine rescue team members, and (g) vendors, manufacturers, suppliers or insurance groups, academia, and contractors.

B. The President shall designate a chairperson. If representation for any of the listed interest groups is unavailable, the President may appoint varying numbers of committee members so long as at least one committee member is appointed for each interest group that has available representation.

C. A Vice-President shall oversee a committee by ensuring the committee is performing the functions delegated to the committee. The Vice-President participates in the committee work, but is not a member of the committee and does not vote on the committee. For the Holmes Mine Rescue Association, the Vice-Presidents for Federal Agencies shall oversee Coal Mine Rescue and Metal and Nonmetal Guidance and Training Support Committees.

D. A Federal representative may not be the chairperson for any audit, scholarship, or finance committee.

E. The chairperson of a committee is responsible for calling committee meetings and accomplishing the work of the committee. The Chairperson may create subcommittees as needed to accomplish the work of the committee. The chairperson may designate members for a subcommittee from non-Executive Committee members.

#### **Section 14. COMMITTEE DUTIES FOR HOLMES SAFETY ASSOCIATION**

A. Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall review all nominations and

recommend nominees for all elective offices and for members of the Executive Committee. At least one member of the Executive Committee, a district council, or a state council shall recommend a nomination. Nominations shall be submitted to the Secretary on or before March 31. The Secretary shall forward all nominations to the chairperson and members of the nominating committee no later than April 15. The chairperson shall communicate with the committee members prior to the National Council Meeting and prepare a proposed slate for presentation to the Executive Committee. Upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee, the President shall present the slate to the membership at the annual National Council Meeting for a voice vote and a plurality vote of those present must approve.

Chairperson may call meetings of the Nominating Committee as necessary and at a convenient time prior to the annual National Council Meeting.

B. Finance Committee. The Finance Committee shall conduct periodic reviews of the Branch's actual and budgeted expenses, recommend the investment of surplus funds, recommend reallocating budgeted funds, and recommend any other action necessary to assure the fiscal integrity of the Branch. The Treasurer for the Holmes Safety Association is not a member of the Finance Committee but shall attend its meetings.

C. Audit Committee. The Audit Committee shall, at least once a year, examine and audit the funds and securities belonging to the Holmes Safety Association and report at the annual meeting of the National Council. The Treasurer for the Holmes Safety Association is not a member of the Audit Committee but shall attend its meetings.

D. Scholarship Committee. The Scholarship Committee will administer the Joseph A. Holmes Scholarship Program under the approved procedures and guidelines of the Holmes Safety Association's Executive Committee. The Holmes Safety Association receives donations for scholarships. The Treasurer for the Holmes Safety Association will maintain these donations in a separate account. The Scholarship Committee shall provide the Holmes Safety Association's Executive Committee with an annual report for review and approval.

E. Program Committee. The Program Committee is to develop and coordinate the annual National Council meeting as outlined in Section 12.E.(1). The committee will arrange all appropriate accommodations as necessary in fulfilling mine safety educational objectives. The chairperson may delegate specific program components to committee members and strive in a collective effort to accomplish informational goals. A committee representative shall report the Program Committee's strategies for the following annual National Council meetings.

F. Revitalization Committee. The Revitalization Committee shall plan, develop, and promote meetings to encourage active membership throughout the States mentioned in Section 12.E. Committee members are to assist in promoting mine safety by organizing, producing, and distributing educational and training information to interested parties. The committee will identify potential growth areas and provide assistance towards establishing new or reviving existing chapters and councils as necessary. A committee representative shall report the current status and future strategies concerning revitalization efforts.

G. Awards Committee. The Awards Committee will administer the Joseph A. Holmes Safety awards under the Executive Commit-

tee's approved procedures and guidelines. The committee shall review all award applications and recommend approval or disapproval according to their specified criteria. The National Secretary for the Holmes Safety Association shall send the chairperson and the committee members all award applications submitted. Each committee member shall respond to the chairperson as award applications are received and evaluated. The committee shall monitor award activities and may suggest potential improvements for the recognition of industry safety efforts as necessary.

H. Constitution Committee. The Constitution Committee shall monitor all committee activities in reference to existing Constitution guidelines. The chairperson along with Constitution Committee members may recommend amendment development to the By-laws or Constitution. The Committee shall report all amendment proposals and any committee activity on proposed amendments of the By-laws and Constitution to the Executive Committee.

## **Section 15. COMMITTEE DUTIES FOR HOLMES MINE RESCUE ASSOCIATION**

A. Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall review all nominations and recommend nominees for the elected Vice-Presidents, Treasurer, and for members of the Executive Committee of the Holmes Mine Rescue Association. At least one member of the Executive Committee shall recommend a nomination. Nominations shall be submitted to the Secretary on or before March 31 of the applicable year. The Secretary shall forward all nominations to the chairperson and members of the Nominating Committee no later than April 15 of the same year. The chairperson shall communicate with the committee members prior to the applicable annual National Council meeting and using the

*continued*

Executive Committee's approved procedures and guidelines, prepare a list of nominees for presentation to the Executive Committee. The President shall call for a voice vote of the Executive Committee and a plurality vote of those present must approve. In alternating years, the chairperson shall communicate with the committee members prior to the applicable annual National Council meeting and prepare a list of Presidential candidates for presentation to the Vice Presidents. The President shall call for a vote and a plurality vote of those present must approve.

Chairperson may call meetings of the Nominating Committee as necessary and at a convenient time prior to the annual National Council Meeting.

B. Finance Committee. The Finance Committee shall conduct periodic reviews of the Branch's actual and budgeted expenses, recommend the investment of surplus funds, recommend reallocating budgeted funds, and recommend any other action necessary to assure the fiscal integrity of the Branch and the Association. The Treasurer for the Holmes Mine Rescue Association is not a member of the Finance Committee but shall attend its meetings.

C. Audit Committee. The Audit Committee shall, at least once a year, examine and audit the funds and securities belonging to the Holmes Mine Rescue Association and report at the annual meeting of the National Council. The Treasurer for the Holmes Mine Rescue Association is not a member of the Audit Committee but shall attend its meetings.

D. Coal Mine Rescue Guidance. The Coal Mine Rescue Guidance Committee shall meet to develop best practices, procedures, and training for mine rescue capability for emergency responses at coal mines. The committee shall disseminate these guidelines, training, or tools.

E. Metal And Nonmetal Mine Rescue Guidance. The Metal and Nonmetal Mine Rescue Guidance Committee shall meet to develop best practices, procedures, and training for mine rescue capability for emergency responses at metal and nonmetal mines. The committee shall disseminate these guidelines, training, or tools.

F. Coal Mine Rescue Training Support. The Coal Mine Rescue Training Committee may plan, participate in, co-sponsor, sponsor, or provide support for the biennial National Coal Mine Safety and Health Mine Rescue Training Contest or other training.

G. Metal And Nonmetal Mine Rescue Training Support. The Metal and Nonmetal Mine Rescue Training Committee may plan, participate in, co-sponsor, sponsor, or provide support for the biennial National Metal and Nonmetal Mine Safety and Health Mine Rescue Training Contest or other training.

## **Section 16. AMENDMENTS TO THE BY-LAWS**

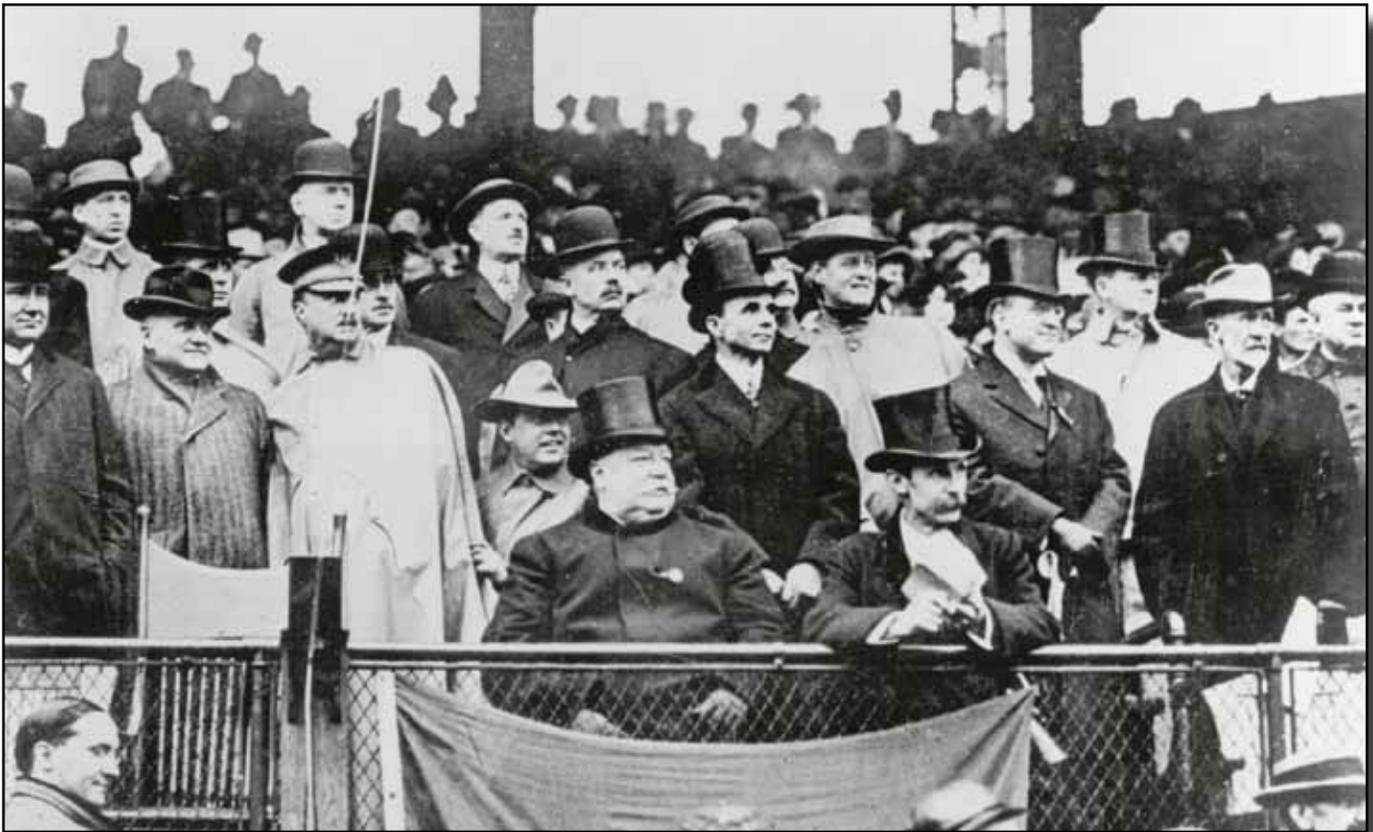
A. Amendment Proposal. The By-laws may be amended by submitting a proposal and supporting rationale to the applicable Branch Secretary by January 31 of each year, or at least four months prior to their respective annual National Council meetings. All proposed amendments must include an endorsement by a member of an Executive Committee or receive official support of an Executive Committee. The Secretary of the applicable Branch shall send copies of such proposals with a response form to the members of the Executive Committee and officers of their Branch. The response form shall provide a means of showing support for or against the proposal, space for comments, and include a return date to the appropriate Branch Secretary. If at least 20 members of the Holmes Safety Association's Executive Committee

or at least 15 members of the Holmes Mine Rescue Association's Executive Committee respond, and plurality of the Branch's responses support the proposal, the applicable Branch Secretary shall publish the proposal in the Joseph A. Holmes Safety Bulletin at least 60 days before each annual National Council meeting to allow comments from their membership. All comments received will be copied and distributed to the members of the appropriate Executive Committee at or before the Executive Committee sessions of the National Council meetings. After any needed discussion, the President shall call for a vote of the Executive Committee. At least 20 members of the Holmes Safety Association's Executive Committee or at least 15 members of the Holmes Mine Rescue Association's Executive Committee must be present in order to hold a vote. If a plurality of the Branch's

Executive Committee supports the proposal, the President shall submit the proposal to a membership vote at the Branch's National Council meeting.

B. Voting of the Membership. If at least two-thirds of the Branch's membership votes from members present at their National Council meetings, to approve the proposal, the By-laws are amended. Such results shall be published in the next edition of the Bulletin.

C. Amendments. Some amendment proposals may require a vote of both Branches before adoption of the amendments. The Secretaries will meet and facilitate the resolution of any issues between the Branches of the Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association concerning amendment proposals.



The first national mine safety demonstration was held at Forbes Field, in Pittsburgh, on October 30, 1911. Approximately 15,000 persons attended the demonstration, including officials of both National and State governments. Seated above are President William H. Taft and Dr. Joseph A. Holmes.

# In the beginning...the early days of mine rescue

In the pioneer studies of mine disasters and their causes, it was found important and necessary to examine conditions in a mine as soon as possible after an explosion or fire. This need led to establishing mine-safety stations and railroad cars. Although the original purpose of these stations and cars was to aid in technical studies, the courageous rescue work performed was so humanitarian and spectacular that the stations and cars soon were referred to as "mine-rescue" stations and cars.

When the Bureau was created there were four stations in the coal fields -- at Pittsburgh, PA, established in 1908; Urbana, IL, in 1908; Knoxville, TN, in 1909; and Seattle, WA, in 1909.

During 1910, stations were added at McAlester, OK, and Birmingham, AL. In 1913, a motor rescue truck was provided at the Birmingham station to speed up the work, and in 1915 another was added at the Pittsburgh, PA, station.

During the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco in 1915, miners were trained at a temporary rescue station. Seven mine-rescue cars were operated during the first 2 years; car No. 8 was added on Nov. 25, 1912. The distribution of cars was as follows:

Car No. 1, in the anthracite field, with headquarters at Wilkes-Barre, PA.

Car No. 2, in the coal fields of New Mexico, Colorado, and Utah, with headquarters at Trinidad, CO, Salt Lake City, Utah, and finally with permanent headquarters at Burnham, CO, a suburb of Denver.

Car No. 3, in the coal fields of western Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois, with headquarters at Evansville, IN.

Car No. 4, in the coal fields of Wyoming, northern Colorado, and Utah, with headquarters at Rock Springs, WY; this car finally was assigned permanent headquarters at Pittsburgh, KS, in the Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas coal fields.

Car No. 5, in the coal fields of Montana and Washington, with headquarters at Seattle, WA, and later at Billings, MT.

Car No. 6, in the coal fields of western Pennsylvania and northern West Virginia, with headquarters at Pittsburgh, PA.

Car No. 7, in the coal fields of southern West Virginia, western Virginia, eastern Kentucky, and eastern Tennessee, with headquarters at Huntington, WV.

Car No. 8, in the Lake Superior metal-mining region at Ironwood, MI.

Stations and cars were equipped both with mine rescue and first-aid equipment, much of which in the beginning came from England and Germany. The railroad cars were former Pullman sleeping cars purchased by the Government. Interiors were remodeled to include an office, training and workroom, and cooking, eating, and sleeping quarters. Each station or car was directed by a mining engineer or practical miner trained in rescue and first-aid methods. Personnel of Car No. 8 included a mine surgeon in 1914, and later Public Health surgeons were assigned to most cars. Work of the stations and cars was under the immediate supervision of James W. Paul, mining engineer. For administration purposes the work was divided in July 1911 among various mining areas of the United States, first into 6 sections; in October 1912 into 9 districts; and in 1915 into 10 districts. These 10 districts were: the anthracite, the Pittsburgh, PA, Southern, Lake Superior,

Southwestern, Central, Southeastern, Rocky Mountain, Northern Pacific, California and Nevada.

The chief work of station and car personnel was to investigate as quickly as possible the cause of a mine disaster, assist in the rescue of miners, and give first aid; and as ordinary routine, to train miners in safety, in rescue and first-aid equipment and methods, and to examine safety conditions at mines and recommend improvements. The cars continuously visited mining centers in all states to present demonstrations, lectures, and training. When a mine disaster occurred near a station, the employee in charge, with available help and equipment, proceeded at once by train or other transportation to the mine.

When a rescue car was used, it was moved by a special locomotive or connected to the first appropriate train available. In the initial 5 years, 300 mine accidents, including explosions, fires, and cave-ins, were investigated. In approximate totals, 290,000 people visited the stations and cars; 230,000 attended lectures or demonstrations; 34,000 were given training in rescue and first-aid methods, and 11,700 training certificates were issued, increasing continuously from 509 in 1911 to 4,258 in 1915.

During the first five years, three of the five men who lost their lives while wearing oxygen breathing apparatus were Bureau of Mines employees.

Many mine operators were induced to operate under a system in which safety was considered of first importance. In 1915 more than 170 mining companies (out of a total of some 3,000 large coal mining companies and 12,000 smaller coal mining companies) had individually, or through the association of two or more companies, established 76 mine rescue stations at which there were some 1,200 sets of oxygen breathing apparatus besides the auxiliary equipment for first-aid and

fire-fighting work. By then, there were also 12 mine rescue cars operated by individual mining companies about their own properties.

The Bureau of Mines endeavored to stimulate similar action by other companies. The miners also began taking up safety work and appointing safety committees, particularly in regions that had been visited by Government mine rescue cars.

Representatives of States, mine operators, and miners all cooperated with the Bureau of Mines in safety work, and this cooperation, from year to year, became more and more an important factor in the progress of the safety movement.

## **MINE SAFETY DEMONSTRATION AND INTERNATIONAL SAFETY CONFERENCE**

The first national mine safety demonstration was held at Forbes Field, in Pittsburgh, on October 30, 1911. The demonstration was planned and managed by engineers of the Bureau, with the aid of miners and coal operators of the Pittsburgh district. It embraced exhibits that demonstrated the character of nearly every branch of the Bureau's investigative work in relation to mine accidents, including first-aid and mine rescue work, coal dust explosions, and also special coal dust explosions at the Bureau's experimental mine at Bruceton, PA. Approximately 15,000 persons attended the demonstration. The principal field exhibits were witnessed by President William H. Taft and many officials of both the National and State governments. Teams of miners trained in first-aid and rescue work from every coal-mining state took part in this stimulating demonstration.

An international conference of representatives of mining experiment stations was held in Pittsburgh, Sept. 14 to 21, 1912, to discuss plans and methods of carrying on experiments relating to mine safety and the interpretation and comparison of the results

*continued*

obtained, to suggest special experiments that could be made to most advantage at a particular station, and to form a permanent organization to promote the exchange of information. In response to invitations sent to those countries having mine-experiment stations or contemplating the establishment of such stations, delegates present were as follows: Austria-Hungary, Julian Cxaplinski, royal mining engineer; Belgium, Victor-Wattayne, inspector general of mines; Germany, Carl Beyling, bergassessor, director of the Dortmund experiment station. Charles E. Munroe, consulting explosives chemist, and George S. Rice, chief mining engineer of the Bureau of Mines, represented the United States. William O'Conner, a mining engineer of Wales, was invited to take part in the meeting as an unofficial representative of Great Britain. Taffanel, director of the Lievin experiment station, who was to have represented France, was unexpectedly recalled just before the conference on account of a mine disaster. Most of the time allotted to the conference was spent in giving papers, discussing investigations at the Pittsburgh experiment station, and in observing coal dust explosions at the experimental mine.

The delegates agreed that it was desirable to form a permanent organization; that approval by the various nations to forming of the organization, and the appointment of delegates be affected through regular diplomatic channels; and that the next meeting be held in 1914 in England or Belgium.

However, owing to the outbreak of war in Europe, the meeting had to be postponed for an indefinite period.

### **FIRST-AID AND MINE RESCUE CONTESTS**

In the third year of the Bureau, interest among mine officials, operators, and miners in first aid led to a number of public first-aid contests in various states. The most impor-

tant of these was the anthracite intercollieries contest at Valley View Park, PA, held under the auspices of the American Red Cross, and the contests held at Greensburg, PA, Birmingham, AL, Knoxville, KY, Gary, WV, and Toms Creek, MI. Such contests began to be held annually as a regular event; company and intercompany contests were followed by state and interstate contests.

Most intercompany contests and all state and interstate contests were held under the auspices of the Bureau, which supplied personnel to take care of the arrangements and do the judging. In 1915, the Bureau aided in 47 contests. The hope of being first in these contests caused miners of each competing team to maintain their first-aid skill at its peak. These contests aided materially in creating interest in first-aid. Another result was the Bureau's work on preparation of regulations for mine rescue maneuvers and first-aid and mine rescue contests in which breathing apparatus, safety lamps, and other safety appliances were to be used. The plan was to rate the men according to their proficiency and give prizes.

From September 23 to 26, 1912, a conference on methods of conducting mine rescue operations and of administering first aid to the injured was held at the Pittsburgh Experiment Station. A number of prominent mine operators, mine surgeons and physicians, heads of safety and mine inspections departments, State mine inspectors, and various members of the Bureau were present. The conference covered first-aid methods, mine hospitals and their equipment, rescue training and safety devices, and resolutions regarding approved apparatus, equipment, and methods were adopted. An outgrowth of the conference was the organization of the American Mine Safety Association, the purpose of which was to cooperate with the Bureau of Mines and aid in the introduction of such safety methods as were officially approved by the Bureau and adopted by the Association.

# Emergency response veterans share the lessons they've learned

*By Launa Mallett, Research Sociologist, Charles Vaught, Mining Engineer and Michael f. Bmich, Jr., Mining Engineer, U.S. Department of Energy, Pittsburgh Research Center, Pittsburgh, PA*

Since 1991 the Pittsburgh Research Center (PRC formerly part of the U.S. Bureau of Mines) has been tapping a valuable resource—researchers have recorded extensive interviews with 30 individuals who are recognized as experts in the area of mine emergency response. These veterans related stories and observations from events experienced during as many as 47 years of response activities. Overall, the response veterans averaged 29 years of mine emergency response experience and 35 years mining experience. Individuals interviewed included representatives from mining companies, the UMWA, and state and federal government agencies. This information was gathered so that it could be provided to today's miners and to tomorrow's emergency response personnel. It is hoped the collective wisdom that has been obtained can be used to help train new responders and guide those decisions which will have to be made on the scenes of future events.

During the interviews, the emergency response experts were asked to discuss lessons they had learned through experience. The interviewers asked them to tell what they had learned that would cause them to handle similar situations differently and to tell about things they saw at past events that they would warn others not to do in the future. In response, the experts discussed a variety of things. Most of their responses, however, touched on some of the same topics including: preparedness, experience, people on-site, mine rescue teams, and decision making. A summary of their responses provides an overview of the lessons learned on-site at the largest mine disasters in the country.

## Preparedness

The most common lesson that experts reported dealt with aspects of preparedness. Almost a third of those interviewed suggested that future responders would better handle situations if they have been properly trained and if appropriate preparations have been made at the mine site. One expert suggested that responders 'Get a good procedure. Work on it. Everybody agree on it and write it up and practice, practice, practice.' Another said that, "It's just a matter to me of organization and if you have the right organization, you don't have that many problems with it."

There was particular concern expressed about the need to develop a strategy for having appropriate personnel available when required. To accomplish this, staff needs must be determined:

[I learned that] I would staff different. And as an example, this last accident that we had, we sent individuals up to handle the mine site, but we didn't think of our own needs within that office. As an example, we had a secretary there, this secretary, we should have sent back up for her. She ended up being the secretary, the phone answerer, the coffee pot girl, frankly, girl Friday. And we didn't worry one iota about wearing her out, the hours that she worked. [It] didn't enter our minds, and I said if we ever did anything again, that has demands like that, I would staff from the, not just the top people, but you got to staff down below. You got to prepare for that too.

*continued*

Once staffing needs have been determined, it is critical that responders know what is expected of them before they arrive on a scene. As one expert said, ..... everybody should have a clear-cut understanding of what their responsibilities are, what their role is, and where they fit into the emergency structured “I think everybody needs to understand exactly what you’re trying to do, whatever it may be.” Preplanning, for both personnel and other resources, is a means of saving time:

One of the biggest lessons I learned is once you’ve arrived on the site, get your backup, get your support, and call for help. You are not invincible. You need help. And get your resources, and get your backup behind you ... You will need them. All your resource and material, ... not necessarily to have the equipment on the property underground. I mean, you can overload with ... a whole bunch of equipment you may never need. But you should have your resources, your check list. If you want to call [to determine] where this equipment is and how soon can I get it here? Do I need it? ... That first fire that I was involved in, and I said that I was going to be the big hero, and I was going to be there. And I was there until 12:00 at night before I called for help. And then, when I called for help, it was a mad scramble, and I should have been calling for that help at eight o’clock in the morning. When I arrived on the property, I should have made those phone calls. “Hey, I’m at the mine. We’ve got the emergency. You guys are on standby. Get this stuff ready ... We may need it.” It doesn’t

necessarily have to come to the property, unless there’s a good chance you’re going to use it, but at least have it ready.

As this quotation suggests, time saved by forethought and preparation can become valuable during a response.

## **Experience**

All of the experts provided glimpses of what it was like to be on-site during responses to major mine emergencies. When asked what they had learned that should be passed on to future generations, five of them discussed how experience influences the effectiveness of responders. One veteran used the example of an emergency operation with which he had been involved early in his career. He concluded that what had taken him 30 hours to complete then would require only half the time now because of his experience. The five individuals also suggested ways to make the most of the learning opportunities that responses create. They talked about the hands-on learning that occurs during a response, about the value of reviewing events and sharing what can be learned from them, and about simulating emergency conditions to give trainees a preview of what they may encounter.

The five veterans recounted that most of their training occurred during responses. One individual discussed how learning can take place under these circumstances. He was not a decision-maker in his first few responses. Instead, he talked with the experienced person who was in charge. This experienced responder explained not only what should be done, but also the technical information that supported each decision. The novice workers asked questions throughout the response and gained invaluable knowledge from the seasoned teacher. During the interview, this subject expressed his opinion that some aspects of mine emergency response have to be learned on-site through

experience. He further pointed out that while presence during responses provides opportunities for learning, it is up to the individuals involved to ensure that teaching and learning take place. Those who stressed experience during their interviews also thought that learning could and should take place through the review of events.

One respondent related a story about re-viewing an event to determine causation. He explained how pieces of the puzzle didn't fit together until well after the event when all testimonies had been reviewed and a report was being written. When this collected information was put together, an analysis became possible and recommendations could be developed to prevent a similar situation from occurring in the future. The significance of summary reports, or formalized hindsight, was also mentioned in terms of the importance of sharing these documents with others in the industry:

"... what we do is, we send [our association] a report, which they can take then and pass it on to other areas. Where ... by our misfortune, they can learn by it too."

It was also suggested that experience can be gained through simulated emergencies. One expert argued there should be available facilities in which mock emergencies can be staged, exposing trainees to something like a real event. Fire training would include responses to burns in controlled environments, for example. "You learn from your mistakes ... Give them opportunities to make the mistakes where no one is going to get hurt. And then we'll have people [who've been trained], and this is what we need because this is ... not something you learn in books."

### **People on-site**

Lessons that had been learned regarding who should and should not be allowed on mine property during a response were passed on by four of the experts. They ex-

pressed concern about people who were not taking active roles in a response but who added complexity to the situation by interfering and/or simply contributing to overcrowding by their presence.

These four individuals also addressed the special needs of victims' family members. Control of site access had been discussed in another portion of the interview, but the experts felt this issue was important enough that future responders should learn from their experiences:

[There] were situations where people had, I guess, influence ... with the company that got into the area that wasn't really needed. I think that there should be a very strict policy on the number of people that come in ... And I don't think that any of them that I know about, really adhered to that policy rigidly enough. I think maybe that in all cases there'd been some people in the area that shouldn't have been there.

The concern of extra people hampering response efforts is one consideration. A related (and equally important) issue is the safety of these bystanders:

... maybe [when] there'd been a rock fall, there's a little too much chance taken around that rock fall. With too many people when you ought to have a little bit less number of people in the area trying to get the person cleared of the rock. I don't think you need eight or ten people around trying to clear the rock, when they were in each other's way. And if there's another fall, you just have that many more people killed.

*continued*

Generally, it was agreed there should be as many people as needed to conduct an efficient and effective response on the mine site and no more.

It was mentioned, however, that special provisions should be made for the family members of missing miners:

[With my experience] I would [now] know that family members are going to be there, and they are going to be very, very apprehensive. Someone with compassion needs to pay a lot of attention to family members and be able to brief them and to make sure that their pastors, their religious leaders, whoever they may be, [are] aware of the situation and invite them to come and be with the family members.

One expert agreed with the need to be as supportive as possible with family members, but warned that it should be clearly established who is and is not considered “family.” He noted that in one case, family friends who were allowed to accompany the family abused their access to mine property in an attempt to gain more information about the victims. It is not surprising that these friends were interested in obtaining as much information as possible, but their activities hampered the efforts of responders. None of the veterans described this type of problem with actual relatives of victims and all felt they should be given every consideration possible.

### **Mine rescue teams**

Four experts had thoughts regarding mine rescue teams that they felt should be communicated to future responders. One issue related to this topic is the problem of response times. Since team members may be away from the mine when an event occurs or may be called to a mine other than the one where they work, time is required to assemble a team.

One suggestion for dealing with this delay is to use a mixed team: “..... you [aren’t] going to call 14 men and 14 of them be at home, if I didn’t get as many men from one team as I wanted to, I took one or two from the other team.” This person cautioned that while response time is important, it must be emphasized that team members (and other responders) should not endanger themselves by driving to the response in an unsafe manner.

“There’s no need to cause some more injury to yourself or someone else, just to get there two seconds, or two minutes earlier.”

Another important issue relating to mine rescue teams is communication between a team and the command center. It was argued that teams sometimes do not follow directions of the command center and that they sometimes do not report back appropriately:

If you let [the teams] go and not know what they’re doing, or for them to ... just call back what they want to tell you, how are you going to make a decision on the surface? You’ll make the wrong decision probably three-fourths of the time, because you don’t know the information. And if they don’t tell you, there’s no way to know. According to those interviewed, mine rescue teams should be the eyes and hands of their command center but this has not always happened during responses. As stated above, roles and responsibilities must be clarified for everyone involved in the response before an event occurs.

### **Decision making**

One set of questions on the interview guide covered the area of decision making. Three of the people who were interviewed thought

some aspect of this issue should also be brought up when speaking of lessons they would like to pass on. In all three cases the focus was on interactions between responsible individuals in the command center. It was pointed out that interplay between multiple people is helpful:

“ . . . it’s best to have somebody that you can talk to because no one person can always know the best thing to do]. They just don’t make them that smart.” On the other hand, conflict between individuals in the command center can be a problem. One person related the story of a “skirmish” that occurred between representatives of regulatory agencies during a response. Another pointed out that, as stated above with regard to planning, command center personnel must know their roles: “I have no problem with the four agencies (company, federal, state, and union), as long as they understand that . . . it’s the responsibility of the company to call the shots.” This individual stated that the government agencies and the union should provide personnel to assist the company if they need it and to discuss with them any decision that may create a hazard. He further reflected that when “ . . . a person at a coal company has the knowledge of rescue and recovery work, it makes the job easier, and I think you get along better. Where a person does not have the knowledge, you’ll have to question him more: ‘Why are you doing this?’ And the plans generally change [as a result of your questions].” A decision maker whose plans are questioned may want to

remember this advice from one of the experts interviewed: “Well, quick decisions is often bad. Try to count to ten anyhow, before you make a decision . . . And a wise man changes his mind, and a fool never does.”

## **Conclusions**

During the interviews with PRC staff members, the experienced mine emergency responders covered a myriad of issues. The most commonly mentioned topic was preparedness. Implicit in their observations is the notion that it is critical to have a well-designed mine emergency plan which has been tested. Additionally, the importance of practice was reiterated as a basic theme. The veterans also talked about the value of experience and suggested that some of this experience could be gotten through practice during such activities as mock emergencies. Almost half the responders mentioned the advisability of rehearsing for actual events before they happened.

A second theme, which ran through discussions, was the essential nature of good communications and control. Over and over respondents talked about the importance of having reliable information about what rescue teams underground were doing. They also considered it crucial to stay abreast of the activities of various parties on the surface. These individuals recognized that the quality of decisions made during a response was directly related to the adequacy of available knowledge and how it was imparted. The implication is that, once an emergency plan has been developed and rehearsal is instituted, particular attention should be paid to the delineation of roles and establishment of communication protocols. If these things are done, future responders will be better prepared to handle the emergencies they face.

*Reprinted from the October 1996 Holmes Bulletin*



# Event Schedule

## Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association Central Alabama Chapter

Mark your calendar for these upcoming meetings.

2013 Meeting Dates & Agenda - Time of Meetings: 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

### **Tuesday and Wednesday, April 2-3 2013**

2013 Northeast Mine Safety and Health Conference

The Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel, State College, PA

### **Tuesday thru Thursday, June 4-6 2013**

2013 Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association National Meeting and Training Seminar. Holiday Inn & Suites North Beach, 3900 Atlantic Avenue, Virginia Beach, VA 23451

Special Rates available for the conference (REFER TO HOLMES SAFETY MEETING). Rates available Sunday, June 2, 2013 through Friday, June 7, 2013 \$139.00 per night (Queen /Queen Room – King Oceanfront w/Sofa) Call 757-428-1711 to book your room!

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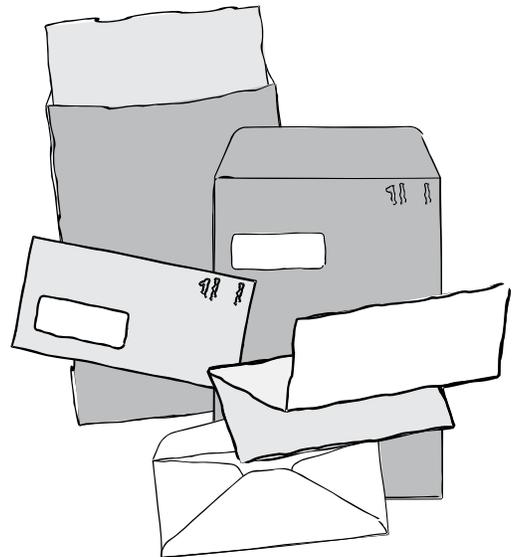
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