

**MINUTES**  
**Pennsylvania Bituminous Mine Safety Advisory Committee**  
**Fayette County Health Center, Uniontown, PA**  
**October 31, 2001**

Chairman Robert L. Frantz opened the Pennsylvania Bituminous Mine Safety Advisory Committee (BMSAC) meeting at 10 a.m.

Attendance:

Robert L. Frantz, The Pennsylvania State University (PSU)  
Thomas Strong, Consolidation Coal Company  
Dave Rebuck, Black Wolfe Coal, Inc.  
Carol Boring, Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) - designated  
representative for Cheryl McGill  
Barb Fotta, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) - designated  
representative for Gerry Finfinger  
Richard E. Stickler, DEP, Deep Mine Safety  
William B. Bookshar, DEP, Deep Mine Safety  
Allison D. Gaida, DEP, Deep Mine Safety

Chairman Robert Frantz opened the business portion of the meeting. Minutes of the July 11 meeting were distributed. A motion was made by Tom Strong and seconded by Dave Rebuck to approve the minutes as typed. The motion carried.

Old Business:

E-Government Program: In an e-mail message dated September 27, 2001, the Office of Information Technology requested this item be dropped from the agenda at this time.

Accident Review, Recommendations, and Reduction Through Safe Job Procedures:

Richard Stickler reviewed the Bureau's status of accidents and investigations, 702 variance investigations, and Pennsylvania diesel equipment approvals. He noted that the number of violations and enforcement actions, as well as the lost time accident frequency rate is trending upward for the past three quarters. The Bureau investigated 79 accidents so far this year -- 62 accidents with no injury and 17 accidents with injury. Roof fall accidents ranked highest in frequency.

Richard Stickler opened the floor for discussion on the similarity of the fatal accident that occurred in June 2001 and one that occurred in December 1999 where a remote-controlled miner operator went under unsupported roof. Carol Boring informed the committee that the mine changed their roof control plan to not allow an extended cut when making a right-hand turn. MSHA has been talking with different operators on this subject. Richard Stickler suggested that NIOSH research the use of a remote-controlled proximity device that could be hung on the last roof bolt and would shut off a machine's power if the operator went in by the device. He

requested that NIOSH take a look at his suggestion and report back at the next meeting. Barb Fotta will pass this request on to Gerry Finfinger.

*Aging of the Workforce*: Barb Fotta represented NIOSH in Gerry Finfinger's absence. NIOSH is considering funding a pilot project to research the following issues identified previously.

1. Develop a "best practices" guide for the current workforce drawing on available literature, industry contacts and other relevant sources. This would encompass the mining and construction industries and would include training, education, and the design of work systems/practices.
2. Develop a strategy for dealing with the influx of new mine workers. This would include the identification of training needs, current training resources available, and an approach for developing training resources that are not available. The mining community could use the future training needs assessment as a guide for future planning purposes.
3. Develop data documenting historical and future employment needs of the mining industry. This would include researching data from the 1970s and documenting what has happened since that time. This data will be used to project what we see happening in the future and communicating this information data to the mining community.
4. Develop data and collect information relevant to the demographics of the workforce specific to the mine industry including age, language, and literacy.

It is suggested that NIOSH request proposals from The Pennsylvania State University and West Virginia University for this project.

*Biosolids and Associated Health Hazards*: This item has been removed from the Pennsylvania Bituminous Mine Safety Advisory Committee agenda. The subject is better suited to be taken up by the Mining and Reclamation Advisory Committee.

New Business:

*Schedule of 2002 Meetings*: Meeting dates for 2002 were scheduled as follows:

April 10  
July 10  
October 9

All meetings will be held at the Fayette County Health Center in Uniontown and begin at 10 a.m. Agenda items for the April 10, 2002, meeting will be Election of New Advisory Committee Chairman; Recommendations and Reduction Through Safe Job Procedures; Remote-Controlled Proximity Device; and Aging of the Workforce.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m.