

Galatia mine rescue team wins third at nationals

By Jim Muir
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GALATIA — A rescue team from The American Coal Co. Mine at Galatia recently won two honors at the National Mine Rescue competition in Louisville, Ky.

Chad Barras, safety director at the mine, said the nine-member team placed third overall and first in competition. Barras said national team competition simulates an underground mine disaster.

"It's similar to local mine rescue competition but only more detailed," Barras said. "It covers everything that could be encountered, including roof falls, explosions, fires, injured miners and the steps that are

encountered in rescuing individuals."

Barras, of Marion, said the Galatia team competed against 38 teams.

"It was certainly some stiff competition and we're very happy to come away with a third-place finish at the national level," Barras said. "We think that says something about the caliber of miners we have at Galatia."

Miner Joe Myers took first in competition involving testing and comprehension of a rescue-breathing apparatus.

Barras, who has 17 years' experience in mining, said the rescue team has been together more than 13 years.

"The object of the competition and the training that goes with it



Provided photo

Honored team: Members of The American Coal Co. Galatia Mine rescue team are (from left) Joe Pollard, Thomas Helmer, Maynard St. John, Joe Myers, Tim Kirkpatrick, Chad Schimpf, Don Gentry, Dave Minor, Chad Barras, DeWayne Whitlock and Trent Cross.

is to improve your skills in the event that there is a disaster that happens at your facility or at a

facility in the area that you might be called on to help," Barras said. "That's really what rescue

competition is all about — preparedness and an extra sense of responsibility in helping to

prevent situations that can lead up to a disaster. It's really a twofold process."

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