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Staff Photo by Michael Coers

Steve Dubovich, a member of the U.S. Steel mine rescue team, checks gas levels in the air during a rescue team contest at the state fairgrounds.

Disaster teams

Mine rescuers show skills in make-believe caves during Interior Department contest here

By CHRIS MORRIS
Courier-Journal Staff Writer

All the rescue team knew for sure was that the foreman of the "Hard Rock Coal Co." and five other men had not returned to the surface of the "mine" at quitting time.

The second shift foreman had entered and observed smoke coming from the section the missing men were in. He returned to the surface and requested assistance.

The rescue team's problem: to explore all accessible areas of the "mine," record conditions on a map, account for the missing workmen and bring survivors to the surface.

With two beeps from the captain's horn, the signal for forward movement, the eight team members set off, clutching a lifeline tightly.

Although the men are all miners with U.S. Steel in Uniontown, Pa., this rescue problem sent them no farther than the east wing of the Kentucky Fair & Exposition Center yesterday morning.

The team was one of 66 participating in the 25th National Mine Rescue and First

Aid Contest sponsored by the Mining Enforcement and Safety Administration (MESA) of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Twelve simulated mines were set up at the fairgrounds for the two-day biennial "World Series of Safety."

Originated in 1911 "for the purpose of stimulating teamwork in mine safety," the contest draws miners from companies in 12 states who work to solve one- and two-hour problems in application of mine rescue techniques.

Most of the contestants probably will never use the gas masks, stretchers and first aid equipment which filled the competition area yesterday in a real mine disaster.

So why would a young miner want to become an expert in the dangerous business of mine rescue?

"Why does a fireman go into a burning building?" countered Thomas Mark, a MESA sub-district manager from Barbourville, Ky.

"When you go into a mine after a disaster, you don't know if you're coming out," Mark said as he watched a team complete

a rescue exercise. "These men are willing to take risks to help their fellow miners. If they think they can help someone, there's no limit to what they'll try to do."

Mark said most men involved in mine rescue operations are young and in excellent physical condition. "They have to be to do the work involved," he said.

Older, more experienced men supervise rescue and transmit directions from outside the mine. Many of the young participants in the contest will go on to become superintendents of their mines, Mark said.

While their primary concern in a mine disaster would be to locate any survivors, participants in the rescue contest must successfully complete a number of other tasks. Judges, many of them mine safety inspectors, monitor the team's movements carefully, noting all mistakes.

Competition is based on the time required to complete a problem and on the successful application of rescue techniques in solving the problem and rescuing victims.

One member of the team must record all conditions in the mine, including

smoke, a loose-roof, caved-in areas, water and composition of the atmosphere. He notes the location of uniforms stuffed with straw — dead bodies for contest purposes.

Smoke bombs are ignited in one area of each mine to test the miners' ability to work with reduced visibility.

At one point in the exercise, the team discovers a live miner. Team members get the victim "under oxygen" by placing a mask on his face and attaching an oxygen pack to his back. He is deposited on a stretcher, covered with a blanket and tied down and removed from the mine.

The coal mine rescue is a two-hour exercise. Other contests include a two-hour metal and non-metal mine rescue, a one-hour mine rescue, a first aid contest and a combination mine rescue and first-aid competition.

First-place teams in each contest will receive a congressional medallion. Trophies will be awarded to other winners.

Jay Petry, captain of a team from Cannellton Industries in Cannellton, W. Va., said his group has been practicing on and off for the last two years.

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usmra_rob
Oct 21, 2025

Rescue teams practice saving lives in mines

By CHRIS MORRIS
Courier-Journal Staff Writer

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Jay Petry, captain of a team from Cannelton Industries in Cannelton, W. Va., said his group has been practicing on and off for the last two years.

Petry's team was willing to devote a lot of time and effort to the contest. "We wanted to compete on a national level," Petry said. He believes it is important "to find out how good you are against other teams in the United States."

Jefferson legis with Carroll on

By ANNE PARDUE
Courier-Journal Staff Writer

FRANKFORT, Ky. — Nine Jefferson County legislators met with Gov. Julian M. Carroll yesterday to discuss a variety of actions to halt busing for school desegregation. They ranged from a special committee to investigate last weekend's busing-protest incidents in Louisville and Jefferson County to a constitutional-amendment conference in Kentucky.

The 90-minute private meeting was at the request of the legislators who called for an investigation of "circumstances of incidents of last weekend, including those attributed to law-enforcement officers," Rep. Dottie Priddy, D-Louisville, said.

Carroll agreed to name a committee of legislators and citizens, none of whom would be from Jefferson County. The governor also:

✓ Agreed to invite legislators from 17 states that have supported an antibusing amendment to the U.S. Constitution to attend a constitutional-amendment conference in Kentucky.

✓ Said he plans to begin court action which will, Mrs. Priddy said, "finally address forced busing."

Richard Lewis, chief administrative assistant to the governor, and Ralph Ed Graves, director of the Office of Local Government, said that Carroll will announce plans for the action "in a few days."

They would not elaborate on the nature of the court action. But the "ultimate goal will be to stop forced busing," Graves said.

Carroll was unavailable for comment

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Top mine rescue teams announced after national contest at fairgrounds

Winners of the 25th National Mine Rescue and First Aid Contest in Louisville were announced last night. Sixty-six teams participated in the two-day event, which was held in simulated mines at the Kentucky State Fair & Exposition Center.

First, second and third place winning teams were announced for the following categories:

One-hour mine rescue — 1st place, Na-

tional Mines Corp., of Wayland, Ky.; 2nd place, Westmoreland Winding Gulf Division, of Tams, W. Va., and 3rd place, U.S. Steel Corp., Gary Division, from West Virginia.

Combination (first-aid and two-hour mine rescue) — 1st place, Pittsburg & Midway Coal Mining Co., Drake No. 3 Mine from Drakesboro, Ky.; 2nd place, Allied Chemical Corp., Semet-Solvay Division, Shannon Branch from Capels, W. Va., and 3rd place, Island Creek Coal Co., Holden (W.Va.) Division.

Two-hour mine rescue — 1st place, Union Carbide Blue Creek Mines, of Clendenin, W.Va.; 2nd place, Allied Chemicals Semet-Solvay Division, Shannon Branch; and 3rd place, Pittsburg & Midway Coal Mining Co.'s Drake No. 3 Mine.

First Aid — 1st place, Pittsburg & Midway Coal Mining Co., Drake No. 3 Mine; 2nd place, Island Creek Coal Co., Holden (W.Va.) Division, and 3rd place, Mountaineer Coal Co., of Clarksburg, W.Va.

Two-hour non-coal-mine rescue — 1st place, Stauffer Chemical Co., Stauffer No. 2, Green River, Wyoming; 2nd place, Cominco American, Inc., Magmont Mine, Bixby, Mo.; and 3rd place, Cargill, Inc., Cayuga Mine, Lansing, N.Y.

The contest was sponsored by the Mining Enforcement and Safety Administration of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

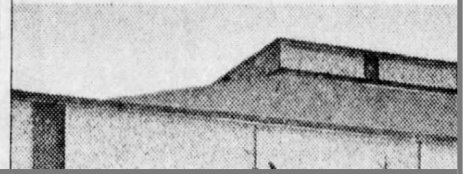
Fund-raiser for Carroll set for tonight

By ED RYAN

Courier-Journal Staff Writer

FRANKFORT, Ky. — On March 1, Ju-

Business. It's b out where the s



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