

## Mine-rescue teams show off skills in contest

By JUDY HUGHES  
Associated Press

Mine-rescue teams competing against each other and the clock in Louisville this week are likely to be safer workers afterward, organizers of the competition say.

Miners from as far away as Utah and Wyoming brought their knowledge of rescue rules and regulations, as well as their life-saving equipment, to show off the skills they hope they never have to use in an actual mine accident.

The pride and prizes that go with winning are only fringe benefits in the view of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Administration, which is sponsoring the competition, the 30th biennial National Mine Rescue and First Aid Contest. It ends a three-day run today.

"It gives you better trained rescue teams. The better trained they are, the less the risk," said Herschel Potter, chief of MSHA's safety division.

Several miners said they had practiced frequently in the weeks before the competition — far beyond the required eight hours of training a month.

"It's a good morale factor. It's an honor" to compete, said John Shutack, MSHA's district manager in

Wilkes-Barre, Pa. "This is like the World Series of rescue."

Teams of mine rescuers, who have other regular mining jobs, take written exams during the competition and are sequestered until called to tackle a mine-rescue problem.

The "mine tunnels" are cordoned paths on a concrete floor, the loose rock merely pieces of paper taped down and the barricades just sheets of yellow plastic hung like shower curtains. The miners wear oxygen masks and operate the same gear they would use in a real mine in a real accident.

Each team designates a worker who stays outside the simulated mine and maps the path, keeping in touch by phone. The others — a lead man, a gas tester, stretcher carriers and a second map man — venture into the mine, after testing their equipment and hearing sketchy details as outlined in the problem.

Numerous judges, most from MSHA, watch for infractions of procedures, errors of judgment, problems in mapmaking and misuse of equipment.

And then there's the clock. "Every second counts. When it's ticking, you're under pressure," said

Mac Ruble, captain of the team from Jewell Smokeless Coal Corp. of Vansant, Va.

His team finished its test in 54 minutes. Some teams took nearly two hours. But speed is not everything in mine rescues.

"The rule in mine rescue is that you proceed cautiously; you never hurry," Shutack said.

Done properly, the mock exercise has members charting the mine from its entrances, removing dummies representing live miners and leaving in those representing dead miners, testing frequently for gases, dealing with fire, building barricades, adjusting ventilation, and testing the mine roof.

To get to the national competition, the teams must win local and district contests, Potter said.

MSHA has found over the years that people who train for the rescue work are safer employees, said Potter, a former West Virginia member of a mine-rescue team.

The mine-rescue tests conducted Wednesday and yesterday reduced to 20 the number of teams in today's finals. One hundred teams from 12 states had entered.

Competitions also were conducted in equipment repair and first aid.

First-aid teams were given five injury problems to solve in a limited time. One member of each team became the patient and the others tied bandages, attached splints, performed artificial respiration and loaded stretchers.

Rocky Lambert, a member of the first-aid team from the Virginia Pocahontas Division of Island Creek Coal Co., said the competition makes team members more confident about their ability to "work as one."

The team, whose members work at five shaft mines around Grundy, Va., is the defending champion of the combination mine-rescue and first-aid divisions.

### Grant awarded to start cancer research at Purdue

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. (AP) — The National Cancer Institute has awarded a \$1.1 million grant to Purdue University to establish a cancer-research program, a university official says.

A team of 10 investigators will be headed by Professor D. James Morre, director of the Purdue Cancer Research Center.

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