

# FIELD ★ NOTES

South Central District

Fall 2004

## FROM THE DISTRICT MANAGER

Valued Employees and Stakeholders:

This edition of 'Field Notes' comes at a time when the seasons are beginning to change. Our young ones have returned to school for another year, fall activities are in full bloom, and joyous holidays are just around the corner. Change and activity will be prevalent in the mining community as well. However, we need to keep our attention focused on safety and health as we face the many changes ahead.



Edward E. Lopez

In this publication you will find several articles relating to safety and health achievements in the district and it is to those accomplishments that I wish to dedicate this issue. As I have traveled around the district this year, I have had the pleasure of meeting many of you and the opportunity to roll out an "I believe in Zero" campaign. I have met some who are already working accident and injury free and many, many more who wish to do so in the future.

I believe in 'Zero' for I have seen that it is a reality. Some have enjoyed it for days, weeks, months, and in some cases an entire career. If an individual or organization can achieve it for a day, then it can be achieved for two which becomes three and then a week, month, and year. Please join me in the belief that 'Zero' is a number we can and must achieve, for the road to 'Zero' must be paved with Optimism. To quote a miner who won a slogan award out west; "If Zero is to ever be – it's up to Me!"

Have a safe change of seasons and be sure to fully enjoy the holidays.

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## 'ZERO' ACCOUNTS



Elaine Haussecker (3rd from left) and Joseph Krause (5th from right) were recently named "Professional Miners" by the Holmes Safety Association. Haussecker has five years accident-free. Krause has three years accident-free. Both work for TXI near Bridgeport, Texas.



Employees of Lafarge North America's Sugar Creek (Missouri) plant celebrated four years without a lost-time injury on August 13, 2004. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Labor John Correll and Assistant District Manager Mitch Adams joined them.

## SAFETY PAYS AT TRINITY MATERIALS

### 30 YEARS ACCIDENT-FREE



Billy Lockridge has worked accident-free throughout his 10-year career with Trinity Materials at the Valley Farms plant near Ennis, Texas. This extends his accident-free record to 30 consecutive years counting time with his previous employer, Lafarge Corporation. Lockridge started as a loader operator near Seagoville, Texas then ran a dragline for many years and now operates an excavator. His exceptional safety record serves as an inspiration to all miners in north Texas and throughout the South Central District.

This picture and story details were submitted by Trinity Materials' Safety Representative, Arturo Munoz. You are invited to submit photos and story lines via email to [gatewood.fred@dol.gov](mailto:gatewood.fred@dol.gov) or [palmer.bruce@dol.gov](mailto:palmer.bruce@dol.gov) for possible inclusion in future editions of 'Field Notes'.

Newsletters from other MSHA districts and the MNM Quarterly Newsletter are available on the MSHA web page at [www.msha.gov](http://www.msha.gov).

### DO SEAT BELTS SAVE LIVES??!



As if more proof were needed...

...Ramon Cortez, Plant Manager of Trinity Materials' Decatur (Texas) S & G plant, was traveling home one afternoon and waiting to turn left onto a busy highway between Decatur and Bridgeport, Texas. This road is used heavily by customer trucks from area mines.

The driver of a large 18-wheeler failed to see that Ramon had stopped to make a left turn and rear-ended his pickup.

This caused the pickup to be pushed into the traffic of the oncoming lane where another 18-wheeler hit Ramon, spinning him around, and a passenger vehicle hit him, this time on the driver's side door.

Ramon walked away with only a sore left arm, and was back to work the following day. The photo above shows how his pickup looked.

He says, "I've always been a believer in seat belts, and I've always worn them, however, I've always had a hard time convincing my wife to wear them. Now, after seeing me walk out of this accident, she *always* wears her seat belt!"

Thanks to Trinity Materials and Ramon Cortez for permission to print this story and to supervisor Gary Cook for the accompanying photo.

## NEWS AROUND THE DISTRICT



### Lauriski Visits Doe Run

David D. Lauriski (shown left), Assistant Secretary of Labor for MSHA, visited the Doe Run Sweetwater mine on April 8, 2004. The mine won a Sentinels of Safety award in 2003 for their 2002 safety record.

### ACCIDENTS & INJURIES

The leading classification of accidents/injuries in the South Central District continues to be "handling material". This classification includes such tasks as pushing, piling, lifting, etc. and there have been 284 such injuries reported between October 1, 2003 and July 31, 2004. Most of these injuries were sustained to either the shoulder-back or hand-wrist areas of the body. These injuries are seldom fatal but they often result in time away from work and/or restricted duty. Proper lifting technique and a good pair of gloves would have prevented many of these injuries.

### Injury Classifications Most Frequently Reported (10 Mos. FY-04 in SCD)

Handling Material	284 injuries
Slip or Fall of Person	162 injuries
Machinery	108 injuries
<b>All Classifications</b>	<b>843 injuries</b>

### SAFETY IS A VALUE



John Pennington (left), of DXP Safety Masters, was inducted into the MNM Mine Rescue Hall of Fame while at the national contest in Reno, Nevada. DXP and John have been strong supporters of mine rescue contests in SCD.

### OKLAHOMA CONFERENCE SET

The 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Oklahoma Mine Health & Safety Conference is scheduled for October 5-7, 2004 at the airport Holiday Inn in Oklahoma City. The conference is jointly sponsored by the Oklahoma Department of Mines, the Oklahoma Miner Training Institute (OMTI), and MSHA.

Conference activities are planned for both coal and metal/nonmetal attendees. Sentinel of Safety awards will be presented to Oklahoma winners. For more information, contact Ron Cunningham with OMTI at 918-465-2361, extension 281.

### INTREPID COMES TO CARLSBAD

Intrepid Potash LLC, a Denver-based natural resources company, recently purchased the New Mexico operations of Mississippi Potash Inc. and Eddy Potash Inc., both subsidiaries of Mississippi Chemical Corporation. Mississippi Potash had two underground mines near Carlsbad, New Mexico. Under the new management, those mines currently employ about 460 people. Eddy Potash had one underground mine that has been idled since 1997.

### About Potash

Potash is the name for a variety of mined and manufactured salts, all containing the element potassium in water soluble form. Potash is used primarily as an agricultural fertilizer because of the potassium content. Potash deposits occur in beds of sediments at only a few locations around the world, including those at Carlsbad, New Mexico.

### Upcoming Federal Holidays

October 11	Columbus Day
November 11	Veterans' Day
November 25	Thanksgiving Day
December 24	Christmas Eve
December 31	New Year's Eve

## SOLICITORS TOUR HANSON



Hanson Aggregates hosted MSHA and representatives of the Dallas Solicitors' office at their Bridgeport (Texas) Plant on April 27-28, 2004. Mine-site tours each day allowed two different groups from the Solicitor's office to participate. Each group was given the opportunity to view mining equipment up close and to observe mining conditions first-hand. Various presentations were made and provided information about the aggregate industry and Hanson worldwide operations, including the Bridgeport Plant and their safety program.



Members of the Dallas Solicitor's office checked out a Caterpillar "triple 7" haul truck. Together, they conducted a pre-operational inspection of the truck. Afterward, each of them had the opportunity to ride one round-trip in the jump seat with an experienced Hanson haul truck driver.

The concept of visits like this one originated with Assistant Secretary of Labor for MSHA, David Lauriski. Discussions between Ron Mesa, MSHA Conference and Litigation Representative, and Gary Stoneburner, Hanson's Area Environmental Health and Safety Manager, resulted in that vision becoming a reality.

A total of ten members of the Solicitor's office participated in the mine tours. They were joined by area officials of Hanson, the Bridgeport mine management and employees, and one representative of Patton Boggs law firm.



Members of the Dallas Solicitor's office checked out the features of a Caterpillar 992 loader and observed it in action.

All of the parties agreed that the tours and informational sessions served to benefit our common goal of protecting the industry's most valuable resource...**the miner**.

The tours were such a success that Hanson Aggregates has approached other MSHA districts about scheduling similar events.

Thanks to Hanson Aggregates for the photos and to Ron Mesa of MSHA for passing them along with the story.

## DISTRICT MINE RESCUE NEWS



WIPP Silver Team (shown above) took second in the field competition and first overall at the 2004 MNM national mine rescue contest.



Morton Salt Blue Team (shown above) took third in the field competition at the 2004 MNM national mine rescue contest.



MacLean Barton (above center), benchman for the Lafarge North America Limestone Lizards Team, took first in the BG-4 competition at the 2004 MNM national mine rescue contest.



Garry Moore, Jr. (above left), benchman for The Doe Run Company Gray Team, took first in the BG-174 competition at the 2004 MNM national mine rescue contest.

### SC District Miners Enter Hall of Fame

Walt Bryant, Jr. and Stoney Hotard were among five individuals inducted into the MNM Mine Rescue Hall of Fame while at the 2004 MNM national mine rescue contest in Reno, NV.

Bryant is the team trainer and benchman for Morton Salt Team Texas. He has been employed at the Grand Saline mine since 1970 and became involved in mine rescue in 1972.

Hotard is the assistant team trainer and rear captain for Morton Salt Blue Team. He has been involved with mine rescue at the Weeks Island mine since 1968.

The WIPP Blue Team took first in the field competition at the Southwestern Regional Mine Rescue Contest held April 15-16, 2004 at Carlsbad, New Mexico.

Morton Salt Team Texas took first in the field competition at the Southern Regional Mine Rescue Contest held April 30-May 1, 2004 at New Iberia, Louisiana.

The Missouri Regional Mine Rescue Contest will be in Rolla, Missouri October 7-8, 2004.

Other mine rescue news and results may be viewed at [www.msha.gov](http://www.msha.gov).

## DISTRICT HEALTH NOTES

From  
**Steve Viles (Health Specialist)**  
**Bruce Palmer (Industrial Hygienist)**

Whether you are a miner or mine operator, your health is important to us. If you have a problem or question regarding dust, noise, chemicals or other health-related issues, generally it's best to talk to the inspector assigned to your mine before you call us. They are usually familiar with your particular property and working conditions. But if you do call us directly, we will assist you in any way that we can.

### "Major" Miner Responsibilities

Help your miners to take a part in their own safety and health. Mine operators have primary responsibility under the law for their employees' safety and health, but each individual makes decisions minute by minute that affect their own well-being.

Miners should especially focus on watching out for one another. There is nothing old-fashioned about the "buddy system." To paraphrase a popular ad slogan, "Friends don't let friends endanger themselves or others."



Steve Viles (left) shown fit-testing Bruce Palmer with a respirator for use in various mine environments in the district.

### Try a Health Maintenance Schedule

Sometimes you may feel that complying with all MSHA health-related standards is overwhelming. One way to get on top of the situation is to set up a "health maintenance schedule" at your mine.

Chances are you already have an equipment maintenance schedule for your shop that reminds you when to lubricate or service equipment. That's because you have a lot of money invested in that equipment, and preventive maintenance saves you money in the long run.

You also have a great deal invested in your miners, and preventive actions save you money and save lives and health in the long run.

Respirator fit testing, audiograms, health hazard training, dust and noise surveys, MSDS and label reviews are just a few of the regular activities you can put on your annual calendar, and thereby be "ahead of the curve."

Of course creating a "Health Maintenance Calendar" is not an MSHA requirement – just a recommended "best practice." But putting such regular activities on a calendar can help identify and resolve little problems before they become big ones.

We appreciate all the good things you do to care for the health and well-being of the miner. As the first sentence of the Mine Act reads, **miners are the mining industry's "most precious resource"!**