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Virginia Tech and University of Kentucky Compete in first Collegiate Mine Rescue Scrimmage

Buchanan County, Va.- The first collegiate mine rescue competition brought mining engineering students from Virginia Tech and the University of Kentucky to Consol's Mine Rescue Station in Buchanan County, Virginia. Around 30 students had the chance to show off their skills on written tests and on the field where they worked scenarios that could be actual emergencies in underground mines.

The competition was planned by the Society of Mining Metallurgy and Exploration's Eastern Collegiate Mine Rescue Organization. The organization formed in 2015 in an effort to teach the important skills of mine rescue to future employees, earlier.

"Even if these college kids never volunteer for a mine rescue team, the skills they're learning now will go with them," said SME volunteer, Wayne Davis. "And, having experience in mine rescue listed on their resumes will be an asset when they start applying for jobs."

Around 30 students came from both colleges to compete and observe on March 4th at the Consol center. The Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME) provided judges and assistance to the teams.

"Safety is first at DMME," said Virginia Mine Chief Randy Moore. "We want to do what we can to instill that message in these young people in hopes that they will take that to the industry with them. Mine Rescue is one of the best ways to learn how to prevent and react to any situation you may encounter underground."

The teams will head to West Virginia in April for another collegiate mine rescue competition. Teams from West Virginia and Pennsylvania will also compete.