



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

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Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy Recognizes Mine Rescue Day October 30th

Big Stone Gap, Va.- On this day in 1911, the first national mine rescue demonstration was held in Pennsylvania. While mine rescue teams had been around for longer, it officially recognized those that risked their lives to save others working in underground mines. It also led to National Mine Rescue Day, an annual recognition created by the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) to honor those who continue the efforts this day.

The Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME) joins MSHA in celebrating the seventh annual Mine Rescue Day. Throughout history, many in the mining community have been called upon to rescue miners from an array of emergencies in coal and metal-nonmetal mines. Those that make up the teams are often volunteers. While changes in safety laws and regulations over the years have prevented most mine emergencies in which these teams would be needed, they are still prepared for such a call.

“Those who risk their lives for their fellow underground miners are certainly worth recognizing,” said **Virginia Mine Chief Randy Moore**. “We are proud of the volunteers that put in the extra time and training to be prepared for any emergency. They are a unique and honorable group.”

There are seven mine rescue teams in Virginia. DMME houses the state’s two mine rescue teams—Virginia Mine Rescue. The DMME team provides service to every underground mine in the Commonwealth. Created in 2016, the team is equipped with state of the art communication and mobile equipment that will be available to all those that respond to any emergency in the state of Virginia.

The Virginia Mine Rescue Big Stone Gap team includes Anthony Sturgill, Captain; Danny Mullins, Gas Man; Spencer Lee, Stretcher; Dennis Honaker, Mapman; Ken Johnson, Co-Captain and Vernon Johnson, Jr., Briefing Officer. The Virginia Mine Rescue Lebanon team includes

Joey Musick, Captain; Chris Whitt, Gas Man; Willie Cochran, Stretcher; Sidney Crabtree, Mapman; Andy Sawyers, Co-Captain and Rusty Ward, Briefing Officer. Hunter Atkins serves as an alternate and assists in First Aid for the teams. Both teams are trained by Chris Whitt.

Mine rescue teams complete a minimum of 96 hours of training each year. They visit every mine they may respond to and participate in mine rescue competitions.

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