

Group #1 Discussion Notes – May 2014 – Rapid City So. Dakota

Tom Walker Cloud Peak Energy

Tim Bishop Cloud Peak Energy

Sam Johnson Kemmerer Mine

Mark Rasmussen Westmoreland – Prairie Mine

Dean Jeffery Prairie Mines & Royalty

Bob Silverthorne AC Dandy Products – Alberta Canada

Murray Duncan Nexans AmeriCable

Randen Funk General Cable

Jeff Glenney Startco – Littelfuse

Duane Palm Western Energy

Corey Skalsky Coteau Properties

Safety:

Tom Walker – Cloud Peak Energy discussed some of the details of the bus and car wreck on Hwy 59 south of Gillette, Wyoming. Tom was traveling in the opposite direction at the time following the pilot car. Tim Bishop from Cloud Peak Energy had some fairly graphic photos on his cell phone.

(The incident occurred in a construction zone, a line of vehicles was waiting for the pilot car to return from leading the line of vehicles in the opposite direction. A bus from one of the mines came up from behind, failed to stop, ran into about nine vehicles causing multiple injuries and three deaths.)

Different methods of alerting in-attentive drivers were discussed. The State of Missouri is studying a focused sound emitting device to broadcast an audible warning to approaching drivers. The system is getting a lot of push back from the public regarding noise pollution. Apparently the system can broadcast a focused alarm for several miles.

We discussed that it is a good idea to leave yourself an escape path by not following too close in a construction zone.

The lighted speed signs showing up in different areas were well received by the group. It was felt that these really help a driver monitor his speed.

Bob Silverthorne – AC Dandy – discussed shift change in the Ft. McMurray area in the oil sands in Canada. The traffic on the roads during shift change is very hazardous, signs posted to specifically notify that “Passing is Not Allowed Here” are helping.

Sam Johnson from Kemmerer Mine spoke about the problems with long boring stretches of road and tired, drowsy drivers.

Tom Walker from Cloud Peak Energy spoke of an incident in which a shovel operator ran his boom into an overhead power line. We discussed that when something like this happens, we tend to try to change the system, rather than educate the workforce.

Corey Skalsky - Coteau Properties discussed a recent safety presentation which outlined an accident involving a worker in a tree cutting limbs with a chainsaw. The chainsaw kicked back and cut him in the neck. The worker survived with a near death experience. Duane Palm from Western Energy discussed the use of protective Chaps while using a chain saw.

Murray Duncan from Nexans AmeriCable discussed the hazards of Wildlife on the roads. One incident involved a mauling death by a black bear. Several bystanders unsuccessfully attempted to drive the bear away from the victim. We discussed the hazards on a mine site at which a rattlesnake den was uncovered.

Jeff Glenney – Startco Littelfuse related an incident in which a man was attacked by a wolf. The animal stole his sack lunch, no one was injured in the incident.

Bob Silverthorne – AC Dandy related an incident in which a mine site area had a herd of protected mountain sheep roaming the site. The authorities monitoring the protected animals were putting themselves at risk on the mine site by crossing into the active mining area to monitor the animals.

Sam Johnson – Kemmerer Mine talked about remote areas of the mine sites and exposure to wildlife, and the hazards involved.

Problems and Solutions:

Tom Walker – Cloud Peak Energy discussed the shift in protection for computer systems from virus protection, to invasive attacks targeting data or production machines. Hacking into a mine site to take data, or to interfere with machine operation. He discussed options to isolate the operational computer system from the outside world (no internet access) to ensure the safety of the systems to be protected from outside attack. This sounded like a good idea for a Future Presentation. Dean Jeffery volunteered to pursue the topic with Tom’s assistance.

We also discussed the RSA Tokencode key fob devices, now available as a smart phone application. (cool)

One member of our group vented (violently) about a recent incident in which his laptop was attacked by a virus. Fortunately he had backed up his computer about two weeks prior to the event, and only lost the two weeks of data when he used the back up copy to restore his computer.

Dean Jeffrey spoke about a data acquisition system on his mine site being used to monitor machine operation and report on power usage by machine. The data is being sent to the local utility to assist in supplying power to the mine site. They have an arrangement with the local utility to shut the machines down during peak demand times. Their system broadcasts data using a “Moto Mesh” system.

Sam Johnson – Kemmerer Mine discussed a new cable splicing tool which cuts down the time required to make a cable repair. One device strips and pencils the insulation on a conductor in one action. He felt this device is very handy.

Mark Rasmussen - Westmoreland – Prairie Mine discussed a data acquisition system at his mine site which is supplying similar information to the system discussed by Dean.

Sam Johnson – Kemmerer Mine related the details of a troubleshooting problem in which he was able to contact the vendor who supplied the equipment, and successfully trouble shoot the system over the phone.

Dean Jeffery spoke of newer types of electrical control systems becoming obsolete after only a few years of service. He posed the question, just how long should we expect the new equipment to remain in production? What is the life expectancy of a digital drive?

Our group discussed some of the presentations we have had in the past, and that the presenters may not have a clear idea of some of the applications, and regulations specific to the mining industry. It was suggested that one of our members could sit down with future presenters to discuss the specifics of mining, to assist them in tailoring their presentations to our specific applications.

We discussed vendor vs miner presentations, it was felt that presentations made by miners, supported by vendors would be more meaningful.

We discussed the problems our industry is facing with an aging workforce, and the challenges we face with finding younger workers to replace the retiring personnel. There is a lot of technical information which could (should) be shared with the younger workforce.

It was pointed out that a typical mine electrician is required to work on a number of different systems, and a wide variety of equipment. It is difficult to be and expert on every electrical system on the mine site. It seems that everyone considers a system problem to be electrical in nature, until proven different. An electrician in today’s mines has a lot of cross craft responsibility to be able to trouble shoot the entire system.

Locations:

Austin, Tx. Beer, Barbeque, and atmosphere.

Phoenix – JW Merritt Desert Ridge

We discussed ideas to involve other mine companies in participation in WMEA. Dean discussed his efforts to contact other miners not supporting the organization. Looking for ideas to bring in a wider group of miners.