

MINUTES
Mine Families First Response and Communications Advisory Council
Mine Rescue and Training Facility
Harrisburg, PA
April 28, 2009

A meeting of the Mine Families First Response and Communications Advisory Council was held on April 28 in the 16th Floor Delaware Room in Rachel Carson State Office Building in Harrisburg. The meeting began at 10:21 a.m.

Attendance:

Members Present:

Chairperson Kathleen Kowalski-Trakofler, NIOSH
Rickie Polke, UMWA, At-Large Member - House
Pam Weeks, PEMA
Thomas Hoffman, PCA

Others Present:

Joseph Sbaffoni, DEP-BMS
Jeff Stanchek, DEP-BMS
Marc Roda, DEP Office of Chief Counsel
Allison Gaida, DEP-BMS
John Ream, American Red Cross

Chairman Kathleen Kowalski-Trakofler opened the meeting. Members Judith Shabbick (excused), Richard Trincliski, and Mike Rothermel were absent, nor did their alternates represent them. Minutes from the August 28 meeting held in Ebensburg were reviewed. A motion was made by Tom Hoffman and seconded by Rickie Polke to accept the minutes as submitted.

Report from Bureau of Mine Safety on Activities

Plans were distributed to members for bituminous (Dana Mining Company of PA, LLC, 4 West Mine), anthracite (UAE Coal Corporation Association, Harmony Mine), and industrial minerals (M & M Lime Company, Inc.) as an example of plans received to fulfill the Families First mandate. Mine operators were requested to submit to DEP a detailed Mine Emergency Response Plan that would include actions they would take to implement the Mine Families First Response and Communications Plan. Sixty-one plans were received from all operators with the exception of Brady's Bend Corporation. Plans were reviewed to make sure they were complete, and then an acknowledgement letter was sent to each. Joe Sbaffoni informed the council that plans will be updated in the future to include information on communication and tracking in order to comply with the new mining law.

Family Liaison Training

Jeff Stanchek attended all of the recommended courses to see if they were appropriate for the family liaisons. He determined that some were more appropriate than others. Family liaisons attended a one-day training on Psychological First Aid that was conducted by the American Red

Cross. State DEP liaisons are scheduled to attend a three-day workshop at the National Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) Academy in Beckley, WV, at the end of May. This training will be conducted by MSHA in conjunction with the National Safety Transportation Board. Pam Weeks asked Joe Scaffoni if the people who were being trained would be also available for floods or other disasters in the Commonwealth. Joe replied they would be available. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) need to be developed by the liaisons on how they will put into practice what needs to be done during a disaster.

Joe Scaffoni is satisfied with the plans that have come in and DEP needs to internally continue w/training and identify better training if it becomes available.

Resource List

A resource list for different regions needs to be developed so that contacts would be readily available in the event of a disaster. Jeff Stanchek will work on the development of a mine family liaison resource guide. Pam Weeks will provide contact information for each task force.

Disaster Mental Health Brief

John Ream, American Red Cross, briefed the advisory council on disaster mental health and meeting the needs of the families and responders. He also discussed the concept of psychological first aid and community needs.

John Ream will provide the American Red Cross shelter checklist for the advisory council to refer to in making up a checklist for mine operators to use in selecting a suitable site for families.

Next Meeting

Members agreed to hold the date for next year's meeting on April 22, 2010, in Uniontown. Alternate dates are April 29 and April 21. Members were asked to keep these dates open.

A motion was made by Pam Weeks and seconded by Rickie Polke to adjourn the meeting at 2:03 p.m.