

**MINUTES**  
**Mine Families First Response and Communications Advisory Council**  
**Uniontown, PA**  
**April 22, 2010**

A meeting of the Mine Families First Response and Communications Advisory Council was held on April 22 in the Bureau of Mine Safety training room in Uniontown. The meeting began at 10:12 a.m.

Attendance:

Members Present:

Chairperson Kathleen Kowalski-Trakofler, NIOSH  
Rickie Polke, At-Large Member - House  
Richard Trinclisti, UMWA  
Thomas Hoffman, PCA  
Judith Shabbick, SMRT  
Pam Weeks, PEMA (conference call)

Others Present:

Joseph Sbaffoni, DEP-BMS  
Jeff Stancheck, DEP-BMS  
Allison Gaida, DEP-BMS

Chairman Kathleen Kowalski-Trakofler opened the meeting. Pam Weeks participated in the meeting on a conference call. Minutes from the April 28, 2009, meeting held in Harrisburg were reviewed. Mr. Trinclisti made note of the misspelling of his last name (correct spelling is Trinclisti). A motion was made by Tom Hoffman and seconded by Rich Trinclisti to accept the minutes as submitted.

Chairman Kowalski-Trakofler asked Bureau of Mine Safety Director Joseph Sbaffoni as to the status of the Senate appointee for the Mine Families First Response and Communication Advisory Council. The Director explained that the Senate having hard time finding an individual to serve requested the Bureau make a suggestion. The Chairman requested that the Council members provide suggestions to the Bureau. These suggestions should be made as soon as possible. The Bureau Director will also make some contacts.

Report from Bureau of Mine Safety on Activities Since April 28, 2009, Meeting

Jeff Stancheck distributed a list of DEP liaisons that attended a three-day workshop at the National Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) Academy in Beckley, WV, in May 2009, provided by National Transportation Safety Board. Additional DEP liaisons will attend training at a later date. Jeff explained that Mine Emergency Response Development (MERD) exercises are held at the MSHA Academy or selected sites where a disaster is simulated and everyone has a job to perform (press/family liaisons/family members). The DEP liaisons will be invited to attend one of these MERDs to reinforce the training they attended in Beckley.

Jeff provided an update on the recent Upper Big Branch tragedy in West Virginia. DEP reported that all operators are now compliant with sending their Mine Families First Response and Communication Implementation plans to the Bureau and all plans have been reviewed. Tom Hoffman brought up a concern about personnel changes and suggested a reminder be sent to mine operations to provide updates when needed.

The Bureau of Mine Safety agreed to send a letter to industry reminding them to send updates.

#### Mine Families First Resource Reference Manual

Jeff Stancheck distributed and explained the draft Mine Families First Resource Reference Manual for Pennsylvania Bituminous, Anthracite, and Industrial Minerals mines. Jeff worked with Pam Weeks and also with county support contacts in developing this manual. The manual includes a shelter Facility Survey provided by the American Red Cross. Pam Weeks explained the three levels of shelters that the American Red Cross recognizes. Red Cross already has shelters in counties and agreements in place to utilize these in an emergency. Discussion took place on having the mine owners contact American Red Cross or Salvation Army to see what shelter would be closest to their mines.

**Rickie Polke made a motion to accept the Mine Families First Resource Reference Manual as an interim document. It will be distributed to mines in the Commonwealth by the Bureau of Mine Safety Director after a 2-week review period by the MFFAC. Judith Shabbick seconded the motion.**

The Mine Families First Response and Communications Advisory Council recognized and thanked the Jeff Stancheck and Pam Weeks for the work done in preparing this manual.

The Council members will receive a 48-hour reminder to comment on the manual at the conclusion of the 2-week period. At that time, the Bureau Director will distribute the manual to the industry, suggesting that, if the facility they have listed on their plan does not meet these requirements, they may want to contact their local American Red Cross or Salvation Army to select an alternate facility.

#### Discussion of Expiration of Current Term of Council Members

All Council members were appointed in February 2008 and all terms will expire in February 2011. The Chairman suggested that any members who wish to be reappointed to the Council notify Allison Gaida and she will initiate the reappointment process. Allison should be notified as soon as possible.

#### Presentation of Recent NIOSH Research and training products

Chairman Kowalski-Trakofler presented status of research conducted by NIOSH on psychological aspects of escape and rescue in addition to a description of recent NIOSH training

products on mine refuge chambers. These are available online at [www.cdc.gov/NIOSH/mining/publications](http://www.cdc.gov/NIOSH/mining/publications).

**New Business:**

State Emergency Management Conference

Pam Weeks invited the Chairman and a DEP representative to take part in a panel presentation at the State Emergency Management Conference in Lancaster, September 13-15. The audience of this conference will consist of public safety related state agencies across the Commonwealth, local coordinators, and first responders.

Next Meeting Dates

The council members considered holding a meeting during the State Emergency Management Conference in September in Lancaster. Pam Weeks will have an agenda and additional details after May 11 and will provide this information to the Bureau.

A meeting date for next year was scheduled for April 14, 2011, or April 28, 2011. The Council was requested to hold these dates available and the exact date will be determined at a later time. This meeting will be held at the Bureau of Mine Safety Training Facility in Marion Center.

A motion was made by Pam Weeks and seconded by Rich Trinclisti to adjourn meeting at 12:20 p.m.