

50th Annual Virginia Mining Institute Mine Rescue & Safety Contest, August 3-4



VMI Mine Rescue Champions: Alden Resources from Corbin, KY

Alden Resources Blue Mine Rescue Team took top honors in the Virginia Mining Institute's Mine Rescue Competition held August 3-4. This was the 50th anniversary for the event. The competition was held at the Blacksburg Parks and Recreation Community Center. The rescue and safety contest was sponsored by the Virginia Mining Institute (VMI). The Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME), the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), Kentucky mine officials, Ohio mine officials, West Virginia mine officials, Brick Street and several volunteers that came to help at the event.

The teams competed to conduct rescue and recovery operations in a staged mine disaster scenario. Team members wore full mine rescue gear, including oxygen breathing apparatus, to determine underground mine conditions, construct ventilation controls and locate and extract accident "victims". The teams were judged on their thoroughness in recording mine conditions on a map as they advanced into the "mine" and their ability to identify and respond to hazards that could endanger the team or trapped miners.

DMME's Mine Chief Randy Moore applauded the teams for their work. "Our miners are the most important asset we have to this industry and we want to provide the best for them," said Moore. "This training and these teams are top notch and while everyone is not taking a trophy home, we know they're leaving with valuable skills."

At the Safety Day Contest Awards Banquet in the evening, the keynote speaker was Bill Reid, Managing Editor Coalzoom.com, who spoke on Can We Count on Coal Again? Reid gave a forecast for the industry and said that after the bankruptcies and mergers are over, the coal industry would produce around 29% of the nation's electricity and mine coal at the rate of about 580 million tons per annum. American coal would still be the world's second largest for some time to come. The safety record is always improving and the "new" coal industry has a good future but our voices in support of coal must be heard more loudly.

The following awards were won:

Grand Champion of Mine Rescue: Alden Resources Blue Team (Corbin, KY)

1st Runner-Up of Mine Rescue: Wellmore Red Team (Grundy, VA)

2nd Runner-Up of Mine Rescue: Alpha Natural Resources Southern WV (Beckley, WV)



3rd Runner-Up of Mine Rescue: Buchanan Red Team (Oakwood, VA)

1st Place Mine Rescue Team Day 1: Wellmore Red Team (Grundy, VA)

2nd Place Team Day 1: Alden Resources Blue Team (Corbin, KY)

3rd Place Team Day 1: Alpha Natural Resources Southern WV (Beckley, WV)

1st Place Mine Rescue Team Day 2: Alden Resources Blue Team (Corbin, KY)

2nd Place Mine Rescue Team Day 2: VA Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (Big Stone Gap, VA)

3rd Place Mine Rescue Team Day 2: Wellmore Red Team (Grundy, VA)

First Aid 1st Place: Alpha Natural Resources (Beckley, WV)

Bench 1st Place: BG4-James Gardner, Alabama Green Team (Sumiton, AL)

Bench 2nd Place: BG4-

Bench 1st Place: BioMarine 240R- Nick Shannon, Alden Resources Blue Team (Corbin, KY)

Pre-Shift 1st Place: Terry McClanahan, Wellmore Red Team (Grundy, VA)

Pre-Shift 2nd Place: Bill Carroll, Wellmore Red Team (Grundy, VA)

Pre-Shift 3rd Place: Danny Mullins, VA Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (Big Stone Gap, VA)

Mine Rescue Teams: Alden Resources, LLC - Alden Resources Blue Team, State of Alabama – Green Team, Wellmore Energy Company – Wellmore Red Team, Buchanan Minerals, LLC – Buchanan Black Team, Buchanan Minerals, LLC – Buchanan Red Team, Commonwealth of Virginia – DMME and Alpha Natural Resources – Southern WV. The teams came from Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky and Alabama.



Day 1 Mine Rescue 1st Place: Wellmore Red Team



Day 2 Mine Rescue 1st Place: Alden Resources



First Aid 1st Place: Alpha Natural Resources Southern WV Team



Bench BG4 1st Place: James Gardner, State of Alabama Green Team



Bench Ciopak 240R 1st place: Nick Shannon, Alden Resources



Preshift 1st place: Terry McClanahan, Wellmore Red Team