



Link Line



an update from **WSN** on **YOUR** Mine Rescue program

Issue #15 July 2011

Vale finds gold in Marathon

West Mines team dedicates win to colleagues

▶ Mine rescuers from Vale West Mines celebrated winning the 61st annual Ontario Mine Rescue Competition in Marathon in June, but the festivities were muted by the deaths of two miners a few days earlier at the company's Stobie Mine in Sudbury.

Briefing Officer Jacques Joduin, in accepting the trophy for the team at the closing banquet, dedicated the achievement to miners Jason Chenier and Jordan Fram, killed in a run of muck.

The fatalities, a poignant reminder of the importance of mine rescue, were commemorated with a minute of silence during the awards presentation as most participants and audience members wore black ribbons.

The Vale team of Captain Brian Small, Vice-captain Paul Frising, Eric Gagne, Neil Thompson, Lorne Beleskey, Ron O'Bumsawin, Jodie Dumochel, and Joduin, also won the Team Firefighting Award.

Barrick-Hemlo technician Denis Bilodeau won the Technician Award.

Though the provincial competition has occasionally been held in underground venues in recent years, this marks the first time the entire competition has been held underground at an operating mine, Williams Mine. The effort was undertaken at the request of and with the full support of Barrick-Hemlo officials, as well as the support of the Marathon community.

Please see "Mine" on Pg. 6



Vale West Mines rescue team poses during a break in action at the 2011 Ontario Mine Rescue Competition at Barrick-Hemlo's Williams Mine, near Marathon.

The 2011 Winners

OVERALL WINNERS

1st - Vale West Mines

2nd - Barrick-Hemlo

FIREFIGHTING TEAM AWARD

Vale West Mines

FIRST AID TEAM AWARD

Xstrata Copper, Kidd Mine

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT AWARD

Xstrata Nickel

TECHNICIAN AWARD

1st - Denis Bilodeau, Barrick-Hemlo

2nd - Derrick Parsons, Vale East Mines

3rd - Tom Hopkins, Quadra FNX Mining

We need you!

If you have comments about the newsletter, or suggestions for future articles, please contact Susan Haldane at WSN, (705) 474-7233 ext. 261, or susanhaldane@workplacesafetynorth.ca



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2011 AWARD WINNERS



First Overall
Vale West Mines



Second Overall
Barrick-Hemlo



Technician Award
1st Denis Bilodeau
Barrick-Hemlo



Technician Award
2nd - Derrick Parsons
Vale East Mines



Technician Award
3rd - Tom Hopkins
Quadra FNX Mining



Firefighting Award
Vale West Mines



First Aid Award
Xstrata Copper, Kidd Mine

Platinum Sponsors



Special Equipment Award
Xstrata Nickel

Gold Sponsor



Silver Sponsor



Competition Gallery





Ontario's Best . . . Canada's Best

Forgotten 1986 team receives recognition

Who is the best in mine rescue in Canada? Twenty-five years ago, a team of Ontario Mine Rescue volunteers answered by earning the British Columbia Mining Association Trophy, then awarded to the top mine rescue team in the country, in the first and only time Ontario mine rescuers entered a national competition.

The team, however, received little recognition at the time, an oversight that was corrected at this year's provincial competition when the surviving members were honoured with awards and jackets from Ontario Mine Rescue and Drager Safety Inc.

Teams from Nova Scotia, Yukon, Northwest Territories, Alberta, Saskatchewan and B.C., as well as Ontario competed in the 18th annual Canadian Mine Rescue Competition in Nanaimo, B.C., in September 1986.

"I wasn't even aware of there being a national competition," said Gerry Bilodeau, captain of the Kidd Mine Rescue Team who joined

Team Ontario comprised of the captains of the teams in the 1986 provincial competition.

Larry Livingston, captain of the provincial championship team from Lac Minerals Ltd.'s Macassa Mine, was appointed captain. Al Simpson, from Inco's Creighton Mine, was the briefing officer. Myron McCormick, Greg Hobson, John Hagan, Gerry Labelle, and Brian McKenzie rounded out the team.

Ron Eveson, Senior Ontario Mine Rescue Officer, and mine rescue officers Jack Wallgren and Charlie Burton, now mine rescue supervisor, helped select and train Team Ontario.

"There was the concern that a team of captains would be all captains," said McCormick, the captain of Falconbridge's Onaping team. "The challenge was to get members to fulfill their role and not try to be leaders."

"We were all 'Type A' kind of people," said Hobson, the captain of Noranda Mines Geco Division's team. "But they (the coaches) got us to think like a team and not as a collection of captains."

Hobson, who counted himself as the least experienced, said "I knew I wasn't going to be captain of the team and settled back into the middle of the team."

See "Eveson" Pg. 5



Team Ontario - Sudbury Mine Rescue Officer Jack Wallgren, Briefing Officer Al Simpson (Sudbury), Captain Larry Livingston (Kirkland Lake), Myron McCormick (Onaping), Greg Hobson (Manitouwadge), John Hagan (Red Lake), Gerry Labelle (Elliot Lake), Senior Mine Rescue Officer Ron Eveson, Gerry Bilodeau (Timmins), Brian McKenzie (S. Ont.), Kirkland Lake Mine Rescue Officer Charlie Burton.



Eveson, coaches set high training standard

Continued from Pg. 4

Eveson, known as a competitive spirit himself as a mine rescue officer stationed in Elliot Lake, gathered the team in Sudbury for two weeks, put the out-of-area team members into the same hotel, and put everyone through a rigorous training plan.

“We really trained very hard, very intensely. They set a high standard and were very focused on that,” McCormick said.

Part of the training challenge was to prepare for the different competition format. The national competition tested and scored the teams in six different competition events. The overall point leader would be champion.

“We value the system that challenges the team rather than the responder task,” said Hobson, who the next year became a mine rescue officer, a position he held for 20 years.

The teams competed in written, bench and gas, firefighting, smoke, obstacle and recovery, and first aid tests. Each event had a strict time limit. In Ontario competitions, the team members were accustomed to having all or most of the tests incorporated into a larger scenario.

“Here the person (casualty) is the most important thing, not the time,” McCormick said. “I didn’t like that in that you had a 20-minute time limit and if you were over time you were disqualified.”

“They (the coaches) had a bit of a game plan and were very good in sitting us down and telling us what it was,” Hobson said. “We were trained very well by Ron, Jack and Charlie.”

“We started training early in the morning and went to five or six in the evening every day,” Bilodeau said. “Everything was divided into tasks, trying to complete the elements of the task, meet the expectations and time limits.”

Eveson’s training plan “heightened our level of expectations. The team members gelled together really well,” Bilodeau said.

“We were brothers. Essentially we lived with each other, we worked with each other for a couple weeks, we focused on the task at hand,” said Hobson, agreeing.

By the time the team headed to Nanaimo, McCormick said, “We felt very comfortable with our tasks.”

Bilodeau agreed. “All of the guys that were there were very professional in their training. We were representing the province of Ontario extremely well. We wanted to win the competition. We were determined.”

That determination was shared with other teams – some representing specific mines, others drawn like Team Ontario, Hobson said. “A few of the teams were happy to be there, and a few of the teams were dead serious.”

“They were really looking at Ontario,” Bilodeau said. “Ontario was leading the way in mine rescue and still does.”

The event was held over two days. Ontario was the last to start the first day and the first to start the second day, so they didn’t have “a lot of opportunity to watch the other teams,” Hobson said. But they felt comfortable with their performance.

“Some (tests) were very easy. The gas test was a breeze. The fire task was a live fire, something we weren’t exposed to in Ontario. We just took it in stride,” Hobson said. When the competition was over, “we figured we had a pretty good chance.”

Team Ontario won the first aid, and bench and gas events, but was surprised to learn the Northwest Territories team from Nanisivik Mine, winners of the obstacle and recovery event, tied them for overall winner.

“We got along with those guys wonderfully,” said Hobson, who echoes other Team Ontario members as seeing wins in two categories as all the friendly tie-breaker they need to decide the championship.

Unfortunately, subsequent national events were cancelled due to expense, and while Team Ontario members regret that, it doesn’t bother them.

“We still see the Ontario competition as the pinnacle,” explained McCormick, who like his teammates nonetheless cherishes the experience and the men who shared it.

“The mining world is a small world and it’s always a pleasure to meet the guys,” Bilodeau said. “It was a very proud event. You hold it close to your heart.”





Barrick-Hemlo Capt. Mark Osiecki

Mine rescue teams find missing miners, extinguish fires

Continued from page 1

In the competition scenario, mine rescue teams were called to the mine rescue station to respond to a report of an underground fire. Teams were informed that three workers were missing underground while a fourth was in a refuge station, and instructed to find one of the missing miners, a pumpman believed to be in a pump station drift.

Teams located the unconscious pumpman on a catwalk over a sump in a low-oxygen environment. After treating the worker on the narrow catwalk, and removing him to surface, teams were directed to speak to one of the missing workers, who had since reported from a refuge station.

On their way to the station, the teams discovered the final missing worker, conscious and wearing a Drager Airboss breathing apparatus, but trapped in a truck that had crashed and severed an arcing cable. Teams discovered the fire at a damaged electrical panel when they searched for a switch to the energized cable.

After extinguishing the fire and de-energizing the cable, the teams were able to rescue the remaining worker and transport him to surface. After servicing their BG4s, the teams were called to extinguish a vehicle fire in the yard using a compressed air foam generator, ending the competition problem.

Competing mine rescue teams represented Canadian Gypsum Co. (Southern District); Goldcorp Canada, Musselwhite Mine (Red Lake District); Barrick-Hemlo (Thunder Bay/Algoma District); Xstrata Copper, Kidd Mine (Timmins District), Kirkland Lake Gold, Macassa Mine (Kirkland Lake District); Xstrata Nickel (Onaping District); and Vale West Mines (Sudbury District).

Barrick-Hemlo finished Overall runnerup. Xstrata Copper's Kidd Mine won the Team First Aid Award, while Xstrata Nickel won the Team Special Equipment Award. In the technician competition, Vale East Mines technician Derrick Parsons finished second, and Tom Hopkins, of Quadra FNX Mining, finished third.

This year's competition was co-hosted by Barrick-Hemlo, North American Palladium, Wesdome Gold Mines, and Richmond Mines. The event was sponsored by Drager Safety, Technica Mining, DeBeers Canada, and Acklands Grainger.



Xstrata Copper Capt. Shawn Rideout



Vale West Mines Capt. Brian Small



CGC Capt. Dave Paulmert



Musselwhite Capt. Bernie Haley



Kirkland Lake Gold Capt. Pierre Bellanger



Xstrata Nickel Capt. Martin Bouchard



ABOVE: Perennial mine rescue volunteer Mike Gillis, left, receives an award from manager Alex Gryska in recognition of his 40 years of service to Ontario Mine Rescue at the annual Provincial Mine Rescue Competition Banquet in Marathon in June.

INSET: Mike Gillis during the competition.

40 Years and counting

Ontario Mine Rescue said “Thank you” to long-time volunteer Mike Gillis for 40 years of service during the provincial competition in June.

Gillis followed in his father’s footsteps joining mine rescue after being hired by INCO in June 1971. He began competing in 1973 and continued competing as a team member until 1988 when he became a briefing officer.

Gillis was on the INCO Provincial Mine Rescue Competition championship team in 1994, and retired from competition in 1996, but has volunteered as a judge at every provincial competition since, and is still an active mine rescuer.

The family tradition continues with Mike’s son Kurtis, who also started his career with Vale and is an active mine rescue team member. He has also won at the Provincial Mine Rescue Competition in 2007.

During his career at INCO (now Vale) Gillis worked his way up the ranks to General Foreman in 1990, and has recently taken on the position of Superintendent/Operations Rep. He was the INCO Mutz First Aid Winner in 1975. Mike does not have any plans to retire anytime soon.

Mike and his wife Brenda of 39 years have two children and four grandchildren ranging in age from 14 years to six months.

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