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

Issue #9 July 2009

Vale Inco Crowned With Gold

East Mines wins provincial competition

Mine rescuers from Vale Inco's East Mines were crowned with gold helmets following their overall win in the 59th annual Ontario Mine Rescue Competition in Windsor in June.

The Vale Inco rescuers, Sudbury District champions, and their competitors from each of the other five districts faced the difficult dilemma of trying to rescue four unconscious casualties from a contaminated environment with only one stretcher and one suitable breathing apparatus and no communication with their briefing officer.

Competing mine rescue teams represented Canadian Gypsum Co. (Southern); Goldcorp Canada, Musselwhite Mine (Red Lake); Hemlo Operations (Thunder Bay/Algoma); Goldcorp Canada, Porcupine Gold Mines (Timmins/Kirkland Lake); FNX Mining Co. (Onaping); Vale Inco, East Mines.

The rescuers had been called to the "Provincial Mine", laid out on the floor of the Windsor Expo Centre -- a former General Motors transmission plant -- following an explosion to find up to 10 missing miners, and the source of smoke filling part of the mine. The layout of the gypsum mine included an enclosed 460-foot tunnel filled with smoke.

The six-member teams soon found and administered first aid to an unidentified miner knocked unconscious by an exploding fire extinguisher, made contact with a miner taking refuge in a storage area equipped with oxygen bottles, and put out a fire with fire extinguishers.

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With their gold helmets gleaming, Vale Inco's East Mines team celebrates following their overall win in the 59th annual Ontario Mine Rescue Competition in Windsor.

The 2009 Winners

Firefighting Team Award

Goldcorp Canada, Musselwhite Mine

First Aid Team Award

Goldcorp Canada, Porcupine Gold Mine

Special Equipment Award

Vale Inco, East Mines

Technician Award

1st - Richard Gilbert, FNX Mining Co.

2nd - Denis Bilodeau, Hemlo Operations

3rd - Tim Danard

Goldcorp Canada, Musselwhite Mine

Overall Winners

1st - Vale Inco, East Mines

2nd - FNX Mining Co.

We need you!

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



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2009 Award Winners

First Overall



Vale Inco, East Mines

Second Overall



FNX Mining Co.

Technician Award



1st - Richard Gilbert
FNX Mining Co.



2nd - Denis Bilodeau
Hemlo Operations



3rd - Tim Danard
Goldcorp Canada
Musselwhite

First Aid Team Award



Goldcorp Canada, Porcupine Gold

Special Equipment Award



Vale Inco, East Mines

Firefighting Team Award



Goldcorp Canada, Musselwhite

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Provincial Competition Pictures





The almost eerie smoke-filled smoke tunnel used at the 2009 Provincial Mine Rescue Competition may have contributed to some nightmares and restless nights, but that was not Mine Rescue Supervisor Charlie Burton's intent in designing the scenario.

Learning from a 'Nightmare'

▶ **C**ontrary to what some might think following this year's Ontario Mine Rescue Competition, Charlie Burton does not stay up nights devising nightmare competition scenarios.

And though he does take his time (planning typically begins in September for the June competition) the supervisor of Ontario Mine Rescue doesn't intentionally devise sleep-disturbing scenarios. He prefers challenging learning experiences.

"For any competition you look for weaknesses in our training system, or incidents that have posed problems," when devising a scenario to create a learning experience, Burton said. This year's scenario came from several issues and concerns.

"In Ontario we don't have a lot of portable breathing apparatus to be put on unconscious casualties. It's an issue for mine rescue organizations across North America," Burton said.

Teams can carry one or two CAREvents, but what happens when there are multiple casualties, he asked, pointing to the January 2006

Competition scenarios are learning experiences

Sago Mine tragedy in which 12 miners died of carbon monoxide poisoning underground.

What could rescuers have done, had they arrived while the miners were alive, but all unconscious? Competition teams would have to attempt to solve that dilemma.

After developing the main scenario, "then we have to assess our facilities," said Burton, who knew when he saw the 170,000 square foot, former GM transmission plant that it would be ideal for the scenario he wanted.

"On an arena floor, 100 feet wide by 200 feet long, you're kind of limited with what you can do," but the former plant, now the Windsor Expo Centre, offered the opportunity to spread out the activity points and cre-

ate 460 feet of smoke tunnel, Burton said.

Though it still falls short of full-scale realism, "this is more realistic to what you're going to find underground. It's a longer way" in time and distance to the headframe, to an obviously safe area for unconscious casualties, to resources that maybe needed, he said.

Incorporating a firefighting activity and a special equipment challenge are considerations that require blending the scenario, and additional learning experiences with the facility.

"Do we have to have a fire situation? What type of fires have we been having lately? What type of mine is it?"

Last year the availability of the Alertec facility made using the GripTech rope system an obvious choice for a special equipment challenge, but this year Burton wanted to get away from the traditional focus on mine rescue's special equipment. He wanted competitors to focus on recognizing and using what was available around them.

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“Recognize and use what’s around you”

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All teams did well finding and using the Come Along Winch, which was the special equipment challenge, though they did less well in using the mobile carts, also a part of the “recognize and use what’s around you” lesson.

“Teams looked at it (the arrangement of carts) as an accident,” Burton said, and not as a potential resource.

Similarly, though teams attempted creative solutions to the lack of suitable breathing apparatus, only one team recognized and used the safe refuge offered by a nearby storage area equipped with oxygen cylinders and sheltering a first aid trained worker.

Though he’s often credited or blamed for the scenario, Burton isn’t the only one to work on the provincial competition scenario. Mine Rescue Officer/Consultant Wally Adler and Emergency Services Specialist Shawn Kirwan, who do not train competition teams, and the Ministry of Labour’s John Vergunst provide valuable input into the overall scenario.

FOCUS ON IMPROVEMENT

Adler, Kirwan and Vergunst meet with Burton in January to put critical second eyes on the simulation and iron out the details which are kept secret. District MROs preparing teams for the competition will not see the scenario until the week of the event, and are committed to keeping it confidential.

After the annual June competition, Burton spends part of the summer visiting the competing teams, giving them a complete debriefing on the scenario and their strengths and weaknesses.

“It’s not a case of focusing on something we do wrong,” Burton said, but on what can be done better, especially if the next time the problem is encountered is during an actual emergency.

And the feedback flows both ways.

“One of the main things I ask is ‘What can we do to improve for next year?’”

A common response is the request for more realism, to better represent and recreate the conditions that mine rescuers might be required to face.

“We’re trying to make this a process of continual improvement. We’re always trying to add more realism,” said Burton, who declines to discuss what lessons might be on the agenda for next year’s competition in Timmins.

“I start the process after I do the debriefings,” he said, letting slip only that he’d like to hold the 60th annual competition in the Timmins Underground Gold Mine.

The rest is a secret, and it’s not keeping Burton up late.



Barry Mitchell

30 Years, More to Come

Veteran mine rescuer Barry Mitchell made it a 30-year mine rescue career this year, and has plans to add to that total.

Mitchell began his mining career in 1969 with Canadian Gypsum Co., joining mine rescue in 1979 and represented CGC in 25 district competitions, and one provincial competition.

Mitchell stopped competing in 2003, but remains active not only as a team member, but in assisting in regular and competition training, and as a judge at the district and provincial level.



Al Henzy

Lifesaving Effort Praised

Mine rescuer Al Henzy has been presented with the Ontario Mine Rescue Distinguished Action Award.

Henzy and two CGC Hagersville co-workers administered CPR and used an Automated External Defibrillator to successfully revive a co-worker who suffered a heart attack that left the man not breathing and without a pulse.

The efforts earned the praise of the Haldimand County Emergency Medical Services, which called the action “fast and unselfish.”

Henzy is only the second recipient of the Distinguished Action Award, first given in 2006 and intended for any mine rescuers who save a life under any circumstances.



The team of judges and volunteers behind the 2009 Ontario Mine Rescue Competition gather for a photograph in the calm before the competition.

Deadly CO creates dilemma for mine rescue competitors

Continued from page 1

Then rescuers discovered the four unconscious miners, one trapped, amid the wreckage and several personnel carts in a drift beyond the range of radio communications with their briefing officer, and contaminated by a carbon monoxide level of 1,000 ppm, a deadly level.

Teams struggled with the dilemma, devising different resolutions including using blankets to create an oxygen tent, moving the casualties one by one to the storage area, and moving them one by one to a fresh air drift, while their own oxygen supplies were being depleted.

In addition to finishing first overall, Vale Inco also earned the Team Special Equipment Award for their use of a Come Along Winch to extricate the trapped casualty. FNX Mining Co., Onaping District champions, placed second overall.

Red Lake District champions, Goldcorp Canada, Musselwhite Mine earned the Team Firefighting Award, while Timmins District champions, Goldcorp Canada, Porcupine Gold Mines earned the Team First Aid Award.

Richard Gilbert, of FNX Mining Co., who place third last year won the Equipment Technician Award. Denis Bilodeau, of Hemlo Operations, placed second, and Tim Danard, of Goldcorp Canada Musselwhite Mine, placed third.

This year's competition was co-hosted by Sifto Canada Corp., Canadian Salt Co. Ltd., and Canadian Gypsum Co. Drager Safety was a platinum sponsor, and Jannatec-Radio Technologies and Acklands Grainger were silver sponsors.

This year's event marked the 80th anniversary of Ontario Mine Rescue, established the year after the Hollinger Mine Fire claimed the lives of 39 miners in Timmins in 1928.

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