For those who need a date for cake and ice cream to celebrate Ontario Mine Rescue’s 90th anniversary, Ted Hanley suggests today - June 20.

“If you want to look for a true anniversary of the Ontario Mine Rescue program, you look at what happened in (19)29,” OMR’s vice president said during a presentation at Workplace Safety North’s Mining Health and Safety Conference.

That year “the (then) Workman’s Compensation Board passed Regulation 98 which essentially outlined that they agree that we will establish mine rescue stations, equip them, and appoint Mine Rescue Officers to oversee training in the province, and that will be paid (for) through the workman’s compensation program.”

The minister of mines reviewed it and recommended it, and on June 20, the regulation was approved and ordered, said Hanley.

The creation of OMR was based on the recommendations of T.E. Godson, who was appointed by the Ontario government to investigate the Feb. 10, 1928 Hollinger Mine Fire which resulted in the deaths of 39 miners.

On Feb. 13, Godson was appointed and the final part of his two-part report was released eight months later in September.

TESTAMENT TO DISASTER

“That’s pretty efficient work. It’s a testament to the scale of this disaster and how it was recognized across the province,” Hanley said. Within months, mine rescuers were being trained, and within three years, three mine rescue stations were established.

Investigations into subsequent incidents contributed to the continuing development of mine rescue: the Malartic Fire in 1947 led to standardize training and procedures; the McIntyre Mine Fire in 1965 led to the adoption of the four-hour breathing apparatus; and, the Falconbridge Rockburst in 1984 led to the expansion of mine rescue responsibilities.

“About every 20 to 25 years something occurs that changes how we think about (mine) emergency response in the province,” he said.

The Mining Health, Safety and Prevention Review in 2014 followed the deaths of two Sudbury miners, Jason Chenier and Jordan Fram a year earlier, and Ontario Mine Rescue is working to implement the recommendations of that review, he said.

The first mine rescue competition in 1950 was a basic challenge, Hanley said. Teams had to walk through a set of doors to the end of a drift to take gas readings.

“We’ve expanded that these days to challenge teams to the best of their abilities.”

The competition scenarios, particularly at the provincial competition, are the hardest scenarios mine rescue volunteers will ever face, he said.

Today competitions “are our largest public community engagement events of the year. Spouses, children, community members, co-workers can come to watch the mine rescue competition. We’re evaluating the team, but it’s their chance to tell the community they are there for them.”

“In 1980 there were 100 mine rescue operations conducted in the province, by ’89 that number was down to 40, and by ’99 it was at 23.”

The number of operations has plateaued between 15 and 25 annually, he said.
About Ontario Mine Rescue: For 90 years, Ontario Mine Rescue, now a part of Workplace Safety North, has trained and equipped over 12,000 volunteers to fight fires, rescue injured and missing personnel, and respond to emergencies in Ontario’s mines. OMR maintains a network of mine rescue stations across the province, and also provides specialized emergency services training to industrial organizations. For more information, visit workplacesafetynorth.ca/minerescue.
Treven, Leven and companions, wandering aimlessly, discover bodies of two men sitting against wall dead, lunches opened in front of them.

About 2 p.m., two men who started to locate fire found by N. Petchick and others overcome. Rescue efforts fail as rescuers almost collapse.

When lights go out Friday afternoon C. Leven and C. H. Trevenna grope about the workings for outlet. Gasping for breath, search fails.

At about 9:15 a.m., Friday, Captains Pond and Graham discover smoke, give alarm and start out to warn men. Graham, overcome, dies below.

Gasping men are rushed to the surface in the shaft cages as soon as the alarm is received. All but 31 of the 700 employed are safe.

At 9:45 a.m. Friday, C. H. Trevenna and nine others break air hose and direct currents of fresh air against the surging clouds of poisonous gases.

About 10 a.m., eleven men trapped on the 550 level leave comrades and start climbing up a ramp to the next level above. They are not seen again.

At 11:55 a.m. Saturday, first four men in 19 hours descend shaft, equipped with masks rushed from Toronto by special train.

At 1 p.m. Saturday George Zolob leaves companions on 600 level and crawls on hands and knees to the shaft and signals for the cage.

At 11 a.m. Saturday, first four men in 19 hours descend shaft, equipped with masks rushed from Toronto by special train.

At 1 p.m. Sunday George Zolob leaves companions on 600 level and crawls on hands and knees to the shaft and signals for the cage.

A minute later Zolob is brought to the surface. Weak, suffering from gas, his arrival is the first indication of life below. He tells about his mates.

Zolob and companions, caught in gas, find relief by directing stream of air from pipe against rocky wall and spreading air over greater area.

Fearing insanity from agonizing headaches caused by gas, miners find only relief by bathing heads with water from rocky floor.

Treven, Leven and companions, wandering aimlessly, discover bodies of two men sitting against wall dead, lunches opened in front of them.
1929-1939

Mine Rescue Stations
Timmins (1929-Present)
Sudbury (1930-Present)
Kirkland Lake (1931-Present)

First Mine Rescue Handbook – 1930

Timmins mine rescue volunteers – 1929

First mine rescue vehicle – 1931

First breathing apparatus – McCaa

Austin Neame, first Mine Rescue Officer – 1929-1947

Sudbury mine rescue volunteers – 1936
1939-1949

Mine Rescue Stations

Timmins  (1929-Present)
Sudbury  (1930-Present)
Kirkland Lake  (1931-Present)
Geraldton  (1947- )
Red Lake  (1948-Present)

Second edition
Mine Rescue Handbook – 1941

Declaration from Town of Malartic, PQ,
thanking Ontario Mine Rescue teams – 1947

Oxygen inhalator for use
on unconscious casualties

Mine rescue team exiting from smoke training exercise

Mine rescue vehicle and interior – 1941
1949-1959

Mine Rescue Stations

Timmins (1929-Present)
Sudbury (1930-Present)
Kirkland Lake (1931-Present)
Geraldton (1947-)
Red Lake (1948-Present)
Cobalt (1953-)
Elliot Lake (1958-)

Falconbridge Provincial Mine Rescue Competition team, from left, Pete Henry, Wally Teed, Jack Heit, Doug Daigle, Maurice Lalonde, Mervin Comba – 1952

Mine rescue vehicle and volunteers with Sudbury District Mine Rescue Superintendent George McPhail, left – 1954

First Elliot Lake District Mine Rescue Competition – 1959

Colormetric carbon monoxide tester

Third edition
Mine Rescue Handbook – 1951

HANDBOOK OF TRAINING IN MINING RESCUE AND RECOVERY OPERATIONS

1951
1959-1969

Mine Rescue Stations

Timmins  (1929-Present)
Sudbury  (1930-Present)
Kirkland Lake  (1931-Present)
Geraldton  (1947- )
Red Lake  (1948-Present)
Cobalt  (1953- )
Elliot Lake  (1958- )
Onaping  (1968-present)

During a training exercise, captain Ray Spotton checks his notes while reporting to the briefing officer on a phone – 1962

A mine rescue team listens to a briefing before being deployed to fight the McIntyre Fire – 1965

Testing the inhalation valve on the McCaa breathing apparatus – 1961

A mine rescue volunteer Gerry Tremblay dons a new Dräger BG174 breathing apparatus with the assistance of Mine Rescue Officer John Guthrie – 1968

Sixth edition
1969-1979

Mine Rescue Stations

Timmins (1929-Present)
Sudbury (1930-Present)
Kirkland Lake (1931-Present)
Geraldton (1947-1977)
Red Lake (1948-Present)
Cobalt (1953-1977)
Elliot Lake (1958- )
Onaping (1968-Present)
Algoma (1977- )

The MSA Methane “Spotter”, left, and the G70 Methanometer were introduced to mine rescue volunteers in the 1970s, but . . .

. . . volunteers were instructed into the 1990s on how to use the gas cap on a safety flame lamp to read methane levels

OMR celebrated 50 years by holding the provincial competition in a central location, Timmin’s McIntyre Arena, for the first time in 20 years – 1979

Mine rescue volunteer Dave Bruce shows mine rescue equipment to friends and family at a mine rescue display at Inco’s Stobie Mine – 1977
1979–1989

Mine Rescue Stations

Timmins (1929-Present)
Sudbury (1930-Present)
Kirkland Lake (1931-Present)
Red Lake (1948-Present)
Elliot Lake (1958- )
Onaping (1968-Present)
Algoma
   in Manitouwadge (1977-1982)
   (1987- )
Thunder Bay (1982-1987)
Delaware (1989-Present)

13th edition

Elliot Lake mine rescue volunteer Stephan Boucher demonstrates
the use of the original stretcher bridge he designed for OMR – 1987

The Stevenson Report following
the inquiry into the 1984 Falconbridge
Rockburst – 1986


Linda Bell, left, with the Umex-Thierry Mine Rescue team became the first woman to compete in a Provincial Mine Rescue Competition – 1980
1989-1999

Mine Rescue Stations

Timmins (1929-Present)
Sudbury (1930-Present)
Kirkland Lake (1931-Present)
Red Lake (1948-Present)
Elliot Lake (1958-1998)
Onaping (1968-Present)
Algoma in Manitouwadge (1977-1982)
Delaware (1989-Present)

The 1992 Mine Rescue Handbook, left, a 200-page, soft cover edition, was supplemented by the slightly larger, but thinner Mine Rescue Handbook Annex, a loose-page, plastic binder, which contained more up-to-date details on special equipment being acquired by Ontario Mine Rescue, such as the Rollglis Rope Rescue System.


Falconbridge Ltd., Onaping/Craig Mines, left, and Barrick Gold, Holt-McDermott Mine rescue teams achieved the unexpected, tying for the Provincial Mine Rescue Championship – 1998. That year the event was held for the first (and only time) in Wawa. Kirkland Lake and Marathon held their first provincials in 1994 and 1995, respectively. It returned to Marathon in 2011, and Kirkland Lake in 2018.
1999-2009

Mine Rescue Stations

Timmins  (1929-Present)
Sudbury  (1930-Present)
Kirkland Lake  (1931-Present)
Red Lake  (1948-Present)
Onaping  (1968-Present)
Algoma
  in Manitouwadge (1977-1982)
  in Williams Mine (2006- )
Thunder Bay  (1982-1987)
  (2004-Present)
Delaware  (1989-Present)

Falconbridge’s Christine Bertoli became the first woman to compete as vice-captain in a Provincial Mine Rescue Competition, coincidentally, the first at an underground venue (Fecunis Mine) – 2004

The Dräger BG4 gradually replaced the Dräger BG174 as OMR’s principal breathing apparatus

OMR launched online Mine Gases and Mine Gas Hazard training modules, left, for mine rescue trainees – 2007, and its more successful website, above, with links to competition photos, The Link Line and more – 2008

Handbook of Training in Mine Rescue and Recovery Operations
2001


OMR launched online Mine Gases and Mine Gas Hazard training modules, left, for mine rescue trainees – 2007, and its more successful website, above, with links to competition photos, The Link Line and more – 2008
Mine Rescue Stations

Timmins (1929-Present)
Sudbury (1930-Present)
Kirkland Lake (1931-Present)
Red Lake (1948-Present)
Onaping (1968-Present)
Algoma
  in Manitouwadge (1977-1982)
  in Williams Mine (1987-2006)
  in Wawa (2017-Present)
Thunder Bay (1982-1987)
  (2004-Present)
Delaware (1989-Present)

OMR transitioned from cargo vans to 4WD pickups for improved handling, and to better deal with accumulated mileage, poor weather, rough road conditions and terrain – 2015

St. Andrew Goldfield's Lynne Bouchard became the first woman to compete as captain in a provincial mine rescue competition – 2014

OMR transitioned from cargo vans to 4WD pickups for improved handling, and to better deal with accumulated mileage, poor weather, rough road conditions and terrain – 2015

Ron, left, Mike and Aaron Boutet were one of seven OMR families featured in Drägerman Stories, a series of videos by Dräger Safety – 2018

Kirkland Lake Gold earned gold hard hats and a world title at the 2016 International Mines Rescue Competition (IMRC2016), hosted for the first time in Canada (Sudbury).

Bryan Wilson was one of seven presenters with an OMR connection at the 2013 International Mines Rescue Body Conference (IMRB2013) in Niagara Falls


Volunteers were recorded during competitions in a study on team dynamics under stress – 2012-2014

St. Andrew Goldfield’s Lynne Bouchard became the first woman to compete as captain in a provincial mine rescue competition – 2014

Drägerman dynasty Boutet: Mine rescue – a family trad...
Impact of volunteers extensive & appreciated

Continued from Page 1

A mine emergency operation “is not a drill. This is not a reportable fire that is extinguished in the shop. This is not a false alarm.

“These are the operations were the mine rescue team was activated for fire, gas contamination, non-fire emergencies, entrapment, and so on.”

And though the numbers have gone down, “the severity doesn’t disappear,” Hanley said. “The potential for a catastrophic event is still there even though they (the events) become infrequent.”

OMR’s 900 volunteers, who receive about 60,000 worker hours of training annually, constitute about four per cent of the 22,000 workers employed by mines in Ontario, he said.

“Ninety-eight per cent of their (work) time goes to production. Only about two per cent of their time is set aside for emergency response training.”

But the impact of OMR and its volunteers in mining is extensive, Hanley said, noting he stopped counting at 120 the number of the more than 300 conference participants with a connection to mine rescue.

“You don’t feel like your connected to that 90 years of history but you are, even if you just took a supervisory course and never said another word about mine rescue, that knowledge has gone with you.

“And we appreciate it.”