



Illinois Department of Natural Resources

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Bruce Rauner, Governor
Wayne A. Rosenthal, Director

MINUTES OF MEETING
OF
ILLINOIS STATE MINING BOARD
INA, ILLINOIS
APRIL 16, 2015

The following State Mining Board members were present:

Larry Jones
Tim Kirkpatrick
Randy Lewis
Jim Steiner
Jim Hafliger, Executive Officer

The meeting was called to order by Executive Officer Jim Hafliger. A roll call of board members was made with four members present. Having a quorum, Mr. Hafliger proceeded with the meeting.

Executive Officer Hafliger introduced to those in attendance the new members of the Board and briefly outlined the role of the Board; interpretation of mining laws and regulations, clarification or determination whether action or activity is allowable relative to application the Coal Mining Act, and enforcement action relative to violation of state mining laws.

The minutes from the October 23, 2014 State Mining Board meeting was reviewed and accepted as presented.

The first item on the agenda was Contractor employees. Executive Officer Hafliger stated this topic has been on several Board agendas and possibly would be on other agendas as the agency looks for a workable resolution on how to account for those individuals. He further stated the State Mining Board Meeting 4/16/2015

current numbers the agency has for Illinois coal industry is not accurate as it does not reflect contractor employees. It has been often stated that these persons are not employees of a coal company but the agency and the State Mining Board have felt the mine manager is responsible for all persons working at the mine, both on the surface and underground. Another area relates to the economic benefit or impact of the coal industry and by understating the number employed in the industry is greatly understating its economic impact. This failure to report or recognize the total workforce in the Illinois coal industry could have a negative impact on the agency. For example, MSHA does not use contract employees as part of their formula for awarding training grants. While MSHA has not considered including them, they would welcome the agency providing input how many are employed in the Illinois coal industry.

Executive Officer Hafliger asked each of the Board members their thoughts on tracking contractor employee employment. Board member Jones indicated it may be difficult to track the number working as this would fluctuate based on what activities or work is being performed at a mine. Board member Lewis asked if the agency had any idea on contractor employee employment and Board Clerk Art Rice stated none of the agency's reports ask for information on contractor employees. A question was asked why this information was needed and Executive Officer Hafliger stated that in part it may help the agency receive grants funding but for the most part it was for the safety of the industry. Until the agency can identify how many and who are working in the industry it cannot do its job of ensuring these people are properly trained, have the credentials to do the work or meet state requirements.

Several comments were received indicating the difficulty in acquiring an accurate number as well as suggestions on how to acquire this number. Executive Officer Hafliger stated any method the agency chooses must be implemented through someone OMM has regulator authority over. The obvious choice would be through the mine manager as he has the ultimate responsibility for all workers at the mine.

Dale Winters, Mine Superintendent with Knight Hawk Coal, indicated the companies would need a definition of what was needed and who would this apply; such as, would this include over the road truck drivers?

Executive Officer Hafliger stated the agency would prepare a draft, which would hopefully answer some questions raised today and provide the definition requested by Mr. Winters.

The next item on the agenda pertained to MSHA's Request for Information (RFI). Board Clerk Art Rice provided the Board members seven questions that the agency was preparing a response. While the RFI covered several areas the only one of interest to OMM were those regarding certification, recertification and decertification of mine examiners. MSHA is considering changing existing certification criteria and implement a universal set of criteria and procedures. The agency would be preparing a response to these questions and was opposed to a universal system since Illinois already has a successful certification program.

State Mine Inspector Larry Jenkel took a few minutes to provide the new members an overview of the recently adopted coal mine electrician program. In addition to his overview of the program, Inspector Jenkel gave the members material that described the new program.

The Board members were given a summary of violations written by agency state mine inspectors for 2014 and the first quarter of 2015. Executive Officer Hafliger informed the members that at an earlier Board meeting it was decided to provide this information to the Board. He told the members this summary was not used as part of a quota system but instead would allow the agency to track violations and look for possible trends or concerns within the industry. The agency would continue to provide this information on a quarterly basis to the members.

Executive Officer Hafliger next described the agency's Accident Preventions Presentations. He indicated the agency has taken a different approach to AP and is having one person prepare a presentation each week. This person looks at trends, safety concerns, etc and prepares material that can be used concerning an issue. This presentation is then forwarded to industry personnel as well as internally within IDNR. The agency has received several positive comments and feedback about this AP program.

The next item on the agenda was an update on White Oak Resources experimental extended crosscuts. State Mine Inspector Larry Jenkel presented a Powerpoint presentation on the company's use of exhaust tubing along with extended cross cuts. Inspector Jenkel indicated that even though approval was given at the Board's October 2014 meeting the company has only been utilizing the exhaust tubing with the 200' crosscuts for about the last couple months.

The exhaust fans are set up in the return and tubing is run along the left side of the entry. There is a 30" trunk line that drops to 24" line when extending to the face. This system keeps the miner operator in clear air and the only dust is at the miner head; also, the miner head sprays are being run but not the scrubber. The tubing is hung from the screen wire mesh. The air flow is controlled by a damper that can reduce or increase ventilation to the face. A question was asked what was the workforce's opinion regarding this system and Inspector Jenkel stated the workers, especially the car drivers, liked working in clear air.

Inspector Jenkel added the one problem they have been dealing with is the restricted height where the tubing crosses the entries and the company has gone to oval tubing in the entries. This has increased entry clearance and has not reduced surface area. Board member Jones asked about the time involved in using the exhaust system versus line curtain. Inspector Jenkel said there was not a great deal more work after the exhaust fan is in place but there is an increase in work and time when moving the exhaust fan up an entry. The company is of the opinion in the long run the overall cost for using this system will be less than using line curtains and as long as the amount of tubing they replace remains minimal they feel it is more cost effective.

Executive Officer Hafliger told the members that the agency hired five new inspectors in the latter part of December, 2014. The agency had not hired anyone in several years and these new hires will give us an opportunity to create growth in our inspection/training program.

Having no further business, motion by Board member Kirkpatrick and second by Board member Steiner to adjourn, motion passed.