

Peabody Mines Rescue Teams Put Skills to the Test in Competitions

In January, the mines rescue teams from Twentymile Mine began preparing for the annual mines rescue competitions, training in skills such as search and rescue, ensuring proper ventilation and the correct use of rescue apparatus.

In June, their hard work paid off, as a seven-member team led by Chad Days brought home first place in the Rocky Mountain Mine Rescue Association Price Contest held in Price, Utah. A second Twentymile team led by Beau Becker placed ninth in the overall competition, and the first aid unit from the second team, which was led by John Ormsbee, placed third in the first aid competition. In addition, Twentymile's Danny Green placed first in the pre-shift competition, which involves identifying problems before they become emergencies.



The Twentymile Mines Rescue team finished in first place at the Rocky Mountain Mine Rescue Association Price Contest held in Utah earlier this year.

Chad's team was runner-up at the Price competition last year and was determined to finish in the top spot this year.

"Placing second last year left a bad taste in our mouth, so we wanted to redeem ourselves," said Mark Beauchamp, Safety Technician at Twentymile. "Everyone on that team is experienced, and they all had a common goal."

Similarly, the mines rescue team from the North Antelope Rochelle Mine was focused on bringing home a win at the 33rd Safety Olympian, held in Elko, Nevada, in early July. The team, led by Captain Drew Abramo, finished in first place in the A flight competition.

Other mines from across Peabody's U.S. operations recently have competed in similar mines rescue competitions achieving a wide range of honors. But these competitions, and the training involved, have value beyond the bragging rights.

"Thankfully we don't respond to many real disasters, but we need people who can," said Matt Pedersen-Howard, Vice President – Global and Americas Safety and Health. "Having teams participate in a competition setting helps hone their skills and provides motivation and camaraderie that is crucial in maintaining the ability to respond if ever called upon. Without a competition I doubt they would be at the same level of proficiency and practice."

Mines rescue teams that have earned recognition in competitions this summer include:

- A team from the Wildcat Hills Mine finished in first place in the Harlan County Mine Rescue Competition in Kentucky earlier this month. Jamie Anderson, an underground operator at Wildcat, placed second in the bench competition, which consists of testing a mine rescue breathing apparatus that has had defective parts intentionally added. The timed competition is scored on finding and correcting those defects. A team from the Gateway North Mine also competed in the Harlan County competition, finishing in sixth place out of 13 teams. Gateway's Craig Hawkins placed first in the bench competition.
- The Wildcat Hills team in June placed second in the Kentucky River Mine Rescue competition held in Hazard, Kentucky. Jamie Anderson also placed second in the bench competition.
- A team from Shoal Creek Mine also participated in the Kentucky River competition, finishing in fourth place overall and in third place in the first aid competition.
- In May, the mines rescue team from the Gateway North Mine competed at the Western Kentucky Mine Rescue Contest and placed second out of the 11 teams competing. The Gateway team also placed second at the Southeastern Illinois College Skills Contest in Harrisburg, Ill., on June 11.
- Also in May, the mines rescue team from Shoal Creek finished second in the Alabama Mine Rescue Competition. Shoal Creek's Scott Jordan took first place in the bench competition.
- A team from the Wambo Underground Mine in New South Wales won the 2019 Hunter Valley underground mines rescue competition this summer, with Kurt Bereza also being honored with the Wayne Wallace Shield for Best Captain.
- The team from the Metropolitan Mine in New South Wales took the top position in two events at the recent Northern First Aid competition in Australia and placed second overall at the event.

Chad Barras, Director – Safety and Compliance for the U.S., said the mines rescue teams typically train about 20 days a year, completing exercises such as responding to simulated mine disasters at mock mines or training at burn facilities on the proper methods to fight mine fires.

The pinnacle for the U.S. teams is the national competition, which will be held in late September in Lexington, Ky. Teams from all Peabody's U.S. underground sites will participate in the competition. Stay tuned for details on how our teams fare in this event.