

WMEA Group Discussions Group 6

Bryan Como – Avtron (Group leader)
Donald Jean – Drives & Controls
Michael Burke Sr. Helwig Carbon
Chris Early – Drives & Controls
Dennis Isaacs – Westmoreland – Texas
Wayne Straus – Coteau Mining
Jerry Endres – Retired TXU

Safety Items

(Bryan Como – Avtron) Contractors, do not assume the site knows what you are doing during a site visit. They may assume you understand all the safety risks involved while doing your work. You as a contractor should assign the site to be responsible for the safety aspects of the work to be performed. (Where to turn off and lock out power, what protective equipment they require, what procedures should be taken and who needs to know, any additional training, etc.

Cell phone policies and procedures - We also talked about procedures at different mines, some would let their employees use them only at break and lunch time, some not at all, some only management could have them.

(Wayne Straus – Coteau Mining) discussed fatigue issues during work hours. How difficult it is at times while working shift and problems that may deprive sleep. Wayne shared a time when he was working nights and came home to a broken heater in his house, he worked on it most of the day, was able to get 2 hours of sleep before returning back to work. Most of us that have worked shift work have had similar experiences. We also discussed the 12 hour shift and the 8 hour shift and how much available time you would have each day while working the 8 hour shift.

New Innovations and Technology

We discussed how the solar technology has increased for communication repeaters, mesh network systems, GPS equipment, caution lighting, roadway lighting and area lighting for remote locations.

Our mine (Dennis Isaacs - Westmoreland-Texas) has been using tablets for employees time card and work order information. They log-on at the start of the shift – that information is sent to the server, then during the shift they input work order information and time performing the task, then at the end of the shift, that information is downloaded to the server.

We (Dennis Isaacs- Westmoreland-Texas) installed LED boom lights on one of our draglines, we originally had some complaints from the operators about not being able to see out from the light casting pattern so we changed some of the optics on a couple of the fixtures and were able to obtain what the operators were needing, they are very pleased now with the much brighter work area.

Problems and Solutions

(Bryan Como) EPA Regulations and the effect it is having on coal business – Not much to say but bad for our business.

Dragline spare parts (Donald Jean – Drives & Controls) DCS is starting to collect an inventory of spare parts that are needed for the mines to have them readily available if needed, also if they need to upgrade any machine the lead times for waiting for parts would be greatly shortened.

Future Meeting Topics

(Bryan Como) One meeting each year with an MSHA inspector or representative to answer specific questions to help solve potential problems.

(Bryan Como) WMEA presentation material for vendors to advertise to their customers. Perhaps vendor membership including fund to invite new customers or presenting vendors with a jacket or shirt for bringing a miner to the meeting that has never been.

(Jerry Endres) Possibly providing mine tours. This was done at in the early years of the organization.

Future Locations

Deadwood, South Dakota

Bryan Como was the group leader, Dennis Isaacs was the speaker and writer of this group.