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DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

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DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES
BUREAU OF DEEP MINE SAFETY
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The information anthracite and bituminous coal is in compliance with the Pennsylvania Anthracite Coal Mining Act (November 10, 1965, P.L. 346) as amended and the Pennsylvania Bituminous Coal Mine Act (July 17, 1961, P.L. 659) as amended.

This edition represents the 122 consecutive Annual Report concerning Anthracite and Bituminous Coal Mining Activities.

Anthracite deep production decreased in 1991 by about 149,028 tons. The industry accounted for 380,519 tons produced. Employment and operations decreased over the previous year, and employed about 416 deep miners in 81 operations. There were 76 non-fatal accidents, a decrease, and decrease in fatal accidents to zero.

In the bituminous coal region, deep mine production increased 702,390 tons (41,582,862) over 1990 with approximately 7,562 miners employed, a decrease of 738. The number of deep mines operating was 83, a decrease of 5 over the previous year. There was a decrease of non-fatal accidents, with 824 in 1991 compared to 869 in 1990. Decrease of fatal accidents to zero.

In the metal and non-metal deep mine region, a total of 10 operations produced 4,063,840 tons of minerals and employed 274 miners. No fatal accidents and 15 non-fatal accidents.

The bureau continues to train approximately 7,500 miners per year in mine safety techniques and prides itself on maintaining four first-rate mine rescue stations that are strategically located throughout the coal fields.

For the first time in the history of the underground mining program in Pennsylvania there have been no fatalities during the course of a calendar year. Coal mining in Pennsylvania started a little over 200 years ago, and since that time, every year there have been fatalities attributable to underground coal mining. This year, 1991, no fatalities occurred. We are able to attribute this success to four major facts. These are:

1. The improved quality of the Department's mine foremen and miner certification programs. Through better certification programs and improved trainings which are a result of efforts by

our Bureau of Deep Mine Safety, the commitment by industry, the mining companies and our labor unions to work together we have been able to ensure that the highest safety standards are adhered to in our underground mine.

2. Over the last several years, cooperation and communication between the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), the mine workers union, coal companies and their representative groups, state legislators and the DER have improved. This improved communication ensures that everyone is working towards this goal of improved miner safety. As a result (1) safety standards are adhered to, (2) the reasons for the safety standards are clearly understood by all parties, and (3) the groups have been able to sit down and work out their differences to find the best possible way to accomplish this goal of no fatalities.

3. In early 1990 MSHA embarked on a program to stop all fatalities, in all mining industries, by the year 2000. This accomplishment in 1991 for the underground program in Pennsylvania proves, beyond a shadow of a doubt that it is achievable by the year 2000. Job safety analysis (JSA) has been a critical step along the way. This analysis is a method of studying the safest and most efficient way to accomplish a job. It carries out two basic safety principles: (1) to determine potential accident causes. This is related to detecting the hazards inherent in any job and (2) eliminate potential accidents by removing the identified hazards. The process has for basic components: selecting a job to be analyzed, determining the basic steps of a job or task, identifying potential hazards associated with each step and development solutions for control of a hazard. Once these phases are complete, the result is a written end product for JSA that describes the sequence of basic job steps, the potential accidents or hazards, and the recommended safe process. By implementing the JSA, we have been able to help achieve this goal. This achievement has been accomplished because of DER and management's interest in safety, employes within the company who had a voice in suggesting new methods, and because everyone is now focusing on safety.

   This accomplishment is a starting point and with continued commitment we can achieve the goal of zero mining fatalities in all mining activities by the year 2000.