

Mine where workers died to reopen next week

Sago facility will resume operations with new safeguards in place; investigators still reviewing evidence

By VICKI SMITH
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MORGANTOWN, W.Va.

Federal inspectors at the mine where 12 men died after a January explosion said Friday that workers could re-enter all but the abandoned area where the fatal blast apparently occurred.

Ashland, Ky.-based International Coal Group Inc. will resume production at the Sago Mine in West Virginia next week, said

Ray McKinney, coal mine safety administrator for the Mine Safety and Health Administration.

An ICG spokesman said he could not immediately comment.

Thirteen miners were trapped in the mine Jan. 2 after an explosion and were exposed to deadly carbon monoxide for more than 41 hours before searchers found them. By then, all but one had died.

McKinney said his agency has finished its underground investigation of the mine. He declined

to speculate on what caused the explosion but said investigators are confident the blast occurred in an abandoned and sealed area, near an active mine section known as Two Left.

MSHA and federal scientists with the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health are planning to test the 40-inch-thick, dense foam blocks that were used to seal off the area, McKinney said.

Omega blocks, a lighter, cheaper

alternative to concrete blocks, are widely used in U.S. coal mining.

McKinney said ICG planned to resume work with two shifts but had few other details on the company's plans.

It was unclear how quickly the company planned to comply with new emergency rules that MSHA adopted to help miners escape future accidents.

The rules that went into effect Thursday require coal companies to comply within 30 days or at

least show purchase orders for the necessary equipment.

Companies must give each miner an extra air pack and, in some cases, store additional breathing devices along escape routes. The companies also must ensure miners have clearly marked "lifelines" along escape routes.

Lead investigator Richard Gates said his 10-person team examined the mine's physical condition and equipment, took hundreds of rock dust samples and conducted 46

private interviews with company officials and employees.

Some mine-rescue teams say they have not been interviewed, despite complaints from the victims' families that state and federal officials waited too long to put the rescue teams underground.

McKinney said his team was still reviewing physical evidence and statements already gathered, and would entertain the possibility of interviewing the mine-rescue teams.

Pupils

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE)

director of international studies at Franklin College. "This opens the world for kids who've always been here. They can gain a better understanding of other cultures and open their minds to difference."

Supporting diversity

With the benefits of cultural diversity comes the challenge of meeting the specific needs of diverse people.

There is no countywide group or organization dealing with the changing demographics, but there are efforts to get to know families and help meet their needs.

Some schools have morning announcements in English and Spanish. Others set aside days to talk about different cultures or sample food from other countries.

A church ministry in Greenwood offers tutoring, Bible studies, dental clinics and prenatal health counseling to Hispanic families.

Clark-Pleasant schools are planning meetings with parents of Indian students to help them navigate the school system.

Police have received grants and attended training to learn how to understand and communicate with people who don't speak English.

The Johnson County Public Library offers free English classes. Currently, about 40 adults are enrolled.

The library is also planning a community-wide reading of "The Secret Life of Bees," a book about a white girl living in the South during the 1960s who runs away with her black housekeeper. The book explores themes of racism and acceptance.

Several Spanish-speaking employees at the library are available to help people use phone books to find apartments or churches and answer questions about school districts, said Andrew P. Peck, community relations specialist for the county library system.

These kinds of services are crucial for a community that wants to embrace diversity, Tilon said.

The little things matter. For instance, offering more international food selection at grocery stores and having front desk workers at doctors' offices who speak other languages are important in making people from other cultures feel at home, she said.

Recruiting business

One of the first ways a foreign-owned company begins weeding out potential sites is by surveying communities about diversity.

Companies considering where to relocate will first ask what kind of systems are in place to support employees who speak different languages, said Cheryl Morpheu, executive director of Johnson County Development Corp.

"If it's a foreign-owned company, they want to know, 'Are there people like us and, if so, do you have support systems in your community?'" Morpheu said. "This is part of their weeding-out process. They're doing site elimination."

She gets specific requests about schools and other services such as translation from companies trying to decide where to locate.

When companies ask about what Johnson County can offer their employees from different cultures, she tells them about efforts around the county to support diversity.

She said companies are more likely to come to an area if they know their employees can buy in-

ternational food and groceries and have access to translation services.

"Your community is seen as more cosmopolitan if you accept diversity and different cultures. It makes the community much more competitive," she said.

Schools reach out

Teachers at local schools not only have to modify lesson plans for students who don't speak English, they also have to be aware of cultural differences in their students.

For example, in many cultures, wearing a watch and being on time are not as important as in the West.

So when a student is late for class, teachers need to understand that the student or the parents may have a different perspective about time and help the student learn that being late is not acceptable at school.

Center Grove, Franklin and Greenwood have each designated one elementary school as a magnet for students who speak English as a new language. This makes it easier to meet those students' unique needs, rather than trying to help them when they are spread out among the districts' schools.

At Franklin, a teacher takes students still learning English out of their regular class for two hours each morning to work on language skills, Sargent said.

Staff development and learning to modify lesson plans are important, but so is helping all students and teachers understand cultural diversity, said Bobbi Wayman, coordinator of Clark-Pleasant's English as a new language program.

Clark-Pleasant has doubled its efforts this year to focus on diversity.

A grant will pay for a speaker

to talk to the entire staff about multicultural education. Also, each school will get money to pay for diversity awareness events.

Each school is planning activities for a diversity week in April.

"We're going to have a very multicultural neighborhood, and we want our children to accept all people," Wayman said.

She also writes a newsletter for the corporation explaining things like the beliefs of Sikhs from India and why a student might not make eye contact with a teacher. The district is planning a parent meeting for Indian families next week.

Promoting diversity is a necessity for schools today, Wayman said.

"It's not good or bad or ugly, it's reality," she said. "We're promoting diversity because it's new for us. ... It's not a good or bad thing. It's just the way it is. We want our children to learn our world is diverse."

Greenwood schools have hired additional staff and partnered with an area ministry to offer homework clubs for students and meetings for parents.

At Northeast Elementary, the district's magnet English as a new language school, announcements are read in English and Spanish each day; and all papers sent home to Hispanic parents are translated to Spanish.

Franklin is planning more outreach and programming as the district's English as a new language staff grows, Sargent said.

She also hopes to be able to create a pamphlet for parents who move to the area that would list places to get services such as health care, financial assistant and insurance.

"In our county, this is new, and we want to meet the needs," Sargent said. "We are trying to keep up with the growth and plan for the future."

GREENWOOD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL OPEN REGISTRATION

2006-2007 SCHOOL YEAR

Greenwood Christian School, a ministry of Greenwood Christian Church, will begin open registration for the 2006-2007 school year on Monday March 6, 2006.

Registration for both Greenwood Christian Elementary School and Greenwood Christian Day Care will be conducted in the school office. The school facility is located at 2045 Averitt Road, the site of Greenwood Christian Church. Office hours for registration are 7:00 AM until 6:00 PM. All forms needed are available in the school office between these hours. If you are planning on enrolling or are interested we urge you to act quickly since several of our classes are filling very quickly.

Greenwood Christian School has openings in the following areas:

1. Preschool classes for children who are 3 yrs. old by August 1, 2006
2. Pre-Kindergarten class for those children who are 4 yrs. old by August 1, 2006
3. Explorer's class for teacher recommended Pre-Kindergarten children.
4. Full day Kindergarten classes for those children who are 5 yrs. old by August 1, 2006
5. Elementary classes for grades 1 through 5.

**FOR INFORMATION ON REGISTRATION CONTACT
THE SCHOOL OFFICE AT 881-9970**

Greenwood Christian School will offer a summer day camp again this year. Registration for the summer day camp is open and forms are available in the school office.

Greenwood
CHRISTIAN
2045 Averitt Rd.

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Greenwood Christian School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship programs and other school administered programs.

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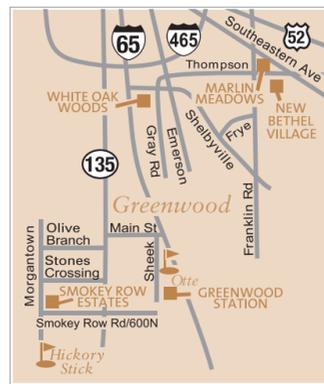
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