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PRESS RELEASE

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Indiana Bureau of Mines Participates in Mine Emergency Drill

Indianapolis, IN April 3, 2007 – The Indiana Bureau of Mines in the Indiana Department of Labor (IDOL), attended and actively participated in a Mine Emergency Response Drill (MERD) held in Monroe City, Indiana on March 29, 2007. Representatives of the Bureau of Mines, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the Federal Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) Peabody Coal Company's Air Quality Mine, Gateway Mine, Vermillion Grove Mine, Willow Lake Mine, Wildcat Underground Mine, Dodge Hill Mine, Francisco Mine and Freedom Mine ran a simulated command center drill for each mine represented. Mine rescue units representing: Peabody's Willow Lake Mine, Black Beauty Coal Company, and Bluegrass Coal Company participated by addressing a mock mine emergency situation. The mine rescue units were evaluated on their performance and were given suggestions on how to improve. In addition, the command center personnel were judged on their handling of the command center communications while their units addressed the mock emergency situation. The role of IDOL and MSHA, along with the mines, was to approve the planned actions of the mines during the course of the drill to ensure that no lives were in jeopardy.

The overall assessment of the exercise was successful and encouraging. After months of planning, the two day emergency drill tested the knowledge and organizational skills of those involved. Mine drills reveal the strengths and the weaknesses of the process, but ensure that the mining industry is continuously preparing for the unexpected. According to Don "Blink" McCorkle, Deputy Commissioner of the Bureau of Mines at IDOL, "All who were involved are now better prepared for an emergency situation. These drills are a way for the teams and all involved to hone their skills, though we hope we never have to use them."

Peabody Coal Company offered the use of their Midwest Training Center in Monroe City, Indiana for the drill. Company officials have stated they are willing to continue their involvement in the planning of drills. "The commitment from and participation by all of the mines and their employees reinforces the strong relationships among all involved in the mining industry" comments IDOL Commissioner Lori A. Torres. "This continued coordination is indicative of the commitment the Daniels Administration is attempting to foster between public and private entities."

For more information or if you have questions, please contact Quin Cheatham at 317.232.2683

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