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PRESS RELEASE

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Indiana Mine Rescue Team Places 1st in Kentucky Mine Rescue Contest

Indianapolis, IN – June 13, 2006 The Indiana Department of Labor and Commissioner Miguel R. Rivera, Sr. are proud to recognize the accomplishments of the Indiana State Mine Rescue Team in the Western Kentucky Mine Rescue Contest.

The WKMI Western Kentucky Mine Rescue Contest, was held in Madisonville, KY on May 24th, 2006 with thirteen teams competing from the states of Indiana, Kentucky, Alabama, and Illinois. The contest consists of a mock mining disaster with different scenarios, such as fires, explosive gases, ventilation problems, and people who are not accounted for after a mine disaster. The teams are briefed on the conditions in the mine and must react as they would during a real mine accident. Judges observe the teams as they work and grade them according to procedures that must be followed according to the National Mine Rescue Association. Commissioner Rivera is proud of the efforts of the Mine Rescue Team. "The first place win should be celebrated in light of the work we have all done over the last 16 months. We have brought the team into the 21st century of mine safety. Our commitment to mine safety in Indiana is reinforced by what we have just accomplished," comments Commissioner Rivera.

The Indiana State Mine Rescue Team won the overall competition. Members include: Tony Wilson: Captain, Julie Bedwell: Map Person, Terry Thombleson: Gasman, Eric Head: Gasman, Mike Workman: Tail Captain, Bob Mowery: Briefing officer, Shane Meadows: Benchman. Other team members include Cory Baker, Scott Kent, Tory Hinton, David Roach, Mark Lyon, Chad McConnell, Troy Goodman, and Tim Riggleman. The team is trained by Greg Xanders, who is in charge of Black Beauty Coal Company's Safety Training Center. Assisting Xanders is the newly appointed Deputy Commissioner Bureau of Mines and Mine Safety, Don "Blink" McCorkle. Xanders is the long time trainer of the Indiana team and is highly regarded in the mine rescue community for his knowledge and dedicated work in mine rescue.

Don "Blink" McCorkle, Deputy Commissioner of the Bureau of Mines comments on the outcome of the contest: "In any Mine Rescue Contest all the teams are winners, they train very hard and are very knowledgeable in their craft and we salute them all. There is a saying in the Mine Rescue Community which states mine rescue is the most demanding work you'll ever do, but by its very nature it has to be." In addition, on June 8th, the Indiana Mine Rescue Team placed 8th out of 15 teams in the Indiana State Mine Rescue Contest.

For more information or if you have questions, please contact Quin Cheatham at 317.232.2655

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