

Arch Coal Tests Emergency Response Plan in Virginia

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DUNBAR, Va., October 11, 2011 -- Arch Coal, Inc. (NYSE:ACI), the U.S. Department of Labor's Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) and the Virginia Department of Mines Minerals and Energy conducted a mine emergency response drill (MERD) today at Pine Branch mine in Wise County, Va.

The full-day rescue exercise involved more than 150 federal and state officials, miners, local law enforcement, emergency responders and other personnel. Employees from across Arch's national network of mines practiced their assigned roles, from mapping specialists to media spokespersons. Arch and the Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College tested high-tech rescue and communication equipment, including hand-held, wireless devices. The devices allow for continuous mine condition updates -- using a shared map -- between underground rescue teams and the surface command center.

"Cumberland River was pleased to be the host site for Arch's second voluntary drill of the year," said Rick Johnson, general manager of Cumberland River Coal Company. "Arch's vision is to operate the world's safest coal mines. Our commitment to operating safely includes regularly refining our emergency plans and practicing the skills we hope to never use."

This marks Arch's fourth all-hands safety exercise in recent years. Each drill features a unique scenario providing challenges and twists over the course of the day. Actors and special effects, including smoke machines, create an intensity that simulates an actual emergency.

Arch's Cumberland River Coal Company subsidiary operates the Pine Branch mine. Cumberland River employs approximately 375 people in Virginia and Kentucky, including its Pine Branch mine near Dunbar. Cumberland River's 2010 lost-time incident rate of 1.04 per 200,000 employee-hours is one-third less than the national underground average of 3.72 incidents per 200,000 employee-hours. Cumberland River's mine rescue team achieved a second place finish in the 2011 National Mine Rescue competition.

U.S.-based Arch Coal is a top five global coal producer and marketer, with 179 million tons of coal sold pro forma in 2010. Arch is the most diversified American coal company, with mining complexes across every major U.S. coal supply basin. Arch supplies cleaner-burning, low-sulfur thermal and metallurgical coal to power generators and steel manufacturers on four continents. In 2010, Arch's lost-time safety incident rate of 0.46 was the company's best yet, and less than one-fifth the industry average of 2.52 incidents per 200,000 employee-hours.