

# Assistant Secretary of MSHA, Keynote Speaker at the 26th Int'l Conference on Ground Control in Mining

Richard E. Stickler, assistant secretary of the U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), presented the keynote address to the participants of International Conference on Ground Control In Mining (ICGCM) on July 31, 2007. Mr. Sticker is responsible for administering the new federal MINER Act, which requires the agency to issue new regulations and adopt new strategies for protecting miners' lives. In his keynote speech, he said that, when I entered the mining industry, we did not have the ground control tools or knowledge we have today. We did not even have approved roof control plans. We had approved roof and unapproved roof. Approved roof were areas the mine foreman approved. Too many times we learned from accidents that these areas should have been supported. The major examples of new technologies that have improved mine safety are: (1) the support systems with better quality, and of greater variety, can address a wider range of problem roof; (2) canopies for face equipment have saved many lives; (3) ATRS (automated temporary roof support) have reduced the haz-

ardous task of manually setting temporary supports; (4) with faster computers and better modeling software, optimum design for a mine can be quickly predetermined; (5) retreat (pillar) mining has benefited greatly from the technological progress in ground control. Mobile Roof Support (MRS) systems reduce or eliminate the need for manually setting posts and cribs. Although there has been good progress in reducing ground control fatalities, clearly there is much more work to be done. Our goal is zero fatalities, and we can't be satisfied with anything short of that goal.

Many of the innovations and technologies we have today were first presented at this conference. We all learn about new technologies, new methods and new advances in ground control and safety in forums like this one. We will continue to have safer mines and safe and healthy miners through the contributions of people like you.

Sixty papers in wide range of technical topics were presented by the speakers from 11 different countries, during three-day conference (July



Mr. Richard E. Stickler and Dr. Syd S. Peng

31-August 1, 2007). The conference brought in researchers, experts, and leaders in the mining industry across the globe. The conference was held in Morgantown, WV, and hosted by WVU's Mining Engineering Department, and co-sponsored by Agapito Associates, CONSOL Energy, Excel Mining System, Fasloc, J. H. Fletcher & Co., Hilti, Jennmar, Micon, Minova USA, NIOSH, MSHA, and the West Virginia Coal Association.



Dan Payne



David Bigby



John Hoelle



Naz Aziz

## International Participants at the Conference

International participants with five or more years of attendance at the conference—Roka Anton, Naj Aziz, David Bigby, John Hoelle, Hani Mitri, Dan Payne, Asel Preusse, and Nielen van der Merwe.—received awards at the International Conference on Ground Control in Mine.



Talking



Picnicing



Blue Grass Music



## Conference Activities:

In addition to technical paper presentations, participants enjoyed talking, picnicking, golfing, listening to blue grass during three-day event in Morgantown, WV.