2016 Safest Fiscal Year in Mining History
SME promotes advancement of health and safety practices

The federal government fiscal year 2016 saw the fewest number of mining deaths in recorded history. With more than 13,000 mines through the United States, only 24 fatalities occurred between Oct. 1, 2015 and Sept. 30, 2016. According to the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), deaths dropped 30 percent from the 2013 level. Assistant Secretary of Labor for Mine Safety and Health, Joseph A. Main, attributes the historic safe period to increased cooperation between MSHA and the mining community.

“The safety and health of our nation’s mining workforce is paramount to SME, and we are pleased to see the industry’s progress toward achieving the goal of zero fatalities and a 50-percent reduction in the rate of injuries by 2020,” stated SME Executive Director David L. Kanagy. “Mine safety and education are extremely important, as evidenced by our creation of a Health and Safety Division, an increase in the number of technical sessions and symposia focused on worker safety, and SME’s endorsement of the National Mining Association’s CORESafety initiative.”

Speaking at the annual Training Resources Applied to Mining conference, Main also praised the industry’s continued efforts to improve the air quality at mining operations, with average respirable dust levels for underground coal mines dropping to historic low levels of 0.64 milligrams of coal dust per cubic meter of air, down from 0.70 milligrams in 2015. To read the MSHA news release, visit www.msha.gov/news-media/press-releases/2016/10/11/mining-deaths-respirable-dust-samples-drop-historic-lows-fy.

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SME is a professional society (nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation) whose more than 15,000 members represent all professions serving the mining, minerals and underground construction industries in more than 100 countries. SME members include engineers, geologists, metallurgists, educators, students and researchers. SME advances the worldwide minerals community through information exchange and professional development.

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SME exists to be the premier resource and advocate for the mining community.
For further details, see www.smenet.org.