CAREERS IN MINING RUN THE GAMUT

From health and safety managers to soil specialists to environmental scientists such as HDR’s James Thomas, mining careers are broad and varied. Read more about the dedication of its professionals in this issue of TXMining. Source: HDR

STEM and Creativity: Key Components of the Mining Industry

Luminant’s Three Oaks Mine Combats Extreme Weather with Operational Excellence

Careers in Mining

Special Report from the TMRA Education Committee

TMRA Teacher Workshops Work to Educate Teachers

Teacher Heather Wood: "Mining Education Begins in the Classroom"

Get Set for the TMRA Annual Meeting

A bucket full of teachers on tour at Luminant’s Three Oaks Mine this past June, part of TMRA’s award-winning Teacher Workshop program. Since its inception in 1991, it has reached more than one million students through educating teachers about the mining industry. Read more on page 18. Source: Francye Hutchins

ON THE COVER
In this issue, TXMining features the depth and breadth of careers in Texas mining, as well as TMRA’s education and outreach programs to educate the public about the industry, which is beneficial to the Texas economy and peoples’ 21st-century lifestyles. On the cover is soil scientist Sam Feagley, PhD, A&M professor and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension State Soil Environmental Specialist and a valuable resource at TMRA Teacher Workshops. Sam is shown here at Sabine Mining Company’s Hallsville Mine during a TMRA Teacher Workshop field exercise. Source: Matt Tanner, HDR

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In 2015, we expanded our TMRA Teacher Workshops to include participation by college instructors. As a former college faculty member in the DFW Metroplex, I wanted to provide instructors with a mining experience they could take back and incorporate into their curriculum. Why is it important that we reach out to colleges and universities? Let me share my experience teaching geology and earth science courses.

Each semester, I would dedicate a lecture to discussing natural resources and mining in Texas to help students have a practical understanding of the geosciences. Prior to the lecture, I asked the students the following question:

What do you know about mining in Texas?
- 54 percent had no knowledge
- 14 percent thought that oil & gas was mined (in a broader sense, this is correct)
- 10 percent stated mining was dangerous and/or bad for the environment
- 9 percent had some awareness of mining

Pre-lecture student responses:
- “That it is the toughest job and so many people die with black liver.” – Jasmine P.
- “Oil mining. Oil spills. I am not very familiar with mining in Texas.” – Kelsie D.
- “Lots of natural gas is mined.” – Chris B.
- “I didn’t even know there was any mining in Texas.” – Dante A.
- “I do not know much about mining in Texas. The only mining I know is the mining in ‘Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.”’ – Vanessa R.
- “It is generally perceived as being destructive to the environment.” – Cheo J.
- “It is important to an extent, but it has bad environmental impacts.” – Christina S.

Post-lecture student responses:
- “I never realized how important the industrial minerals were to everyday life and the economy of Texas.” – Kelsie D.
- “I learned that our electricity comes from lignite.” – Myra M.
- “I was surprised to hear about the reclamation initiative that restores the land and makes it more productive.” – Chris B.
- “It is important to know how cost-competitive coal is in relation to other energy sources.” – Dante A.
- “I am more knowledgeable on mining and appreciate everything more.” – Vanessa R.
- “Little did I know what an integral part mining plays in the state economy.” – Cheo J.
- “Didn’t know how environmentally friendly uranium is.” – Christina S.

Opportunities to interact with academia are all around us. After attending a Geological Society of America sectional meeting on Arbuckle volcanism, I brokered quarry access for two TCU students with an aggregates producer in their study area. The results were beneficial to the quarry, fostered good relations and were rewarding for all involved.

Like so many other professionals, I regularly attend geoscience seminars (all petroleum) at local universities to fulfill continuing education requirements. Offering guest speakers on mining of the caliber that we provide at our teacher workshops to university science departments (biology, forestry and geology) would open up mining to students who had never considered the industry.

Just as reclamation is the lasting impression we leave on the public, so is our message on Texas mining to the success of our industry. —Chris

With my time as Chairman coming to an end, I would like to express my sincere appreciation and thanks to all TMRA Members for having provided me with this opportunity to serve and contribute to the association. TMRA is in great hands. Our members, committees, board and staff have made tremendous strides in improving the quality of services and programs it offers, while building upon TMRA’s already strong reputation as the single voice for the Texas mining industry.

We are all aware that TMRA would not be as successful as it is today without the leadership of its Executive Director Ches Blevins; incredible staff and program support from Krissy Lilljedahl, Francye Hutchins and Cathy Pierce; and public relations guidance from Pure Energy PR, Christian Goff, Amy Landrum and Jeannine “Mike” Wheeler. And to all with whom I have served: thank you for your guidance, hard work and dedication.
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In considering this issue on careers and education in Texas mining, I realize once again the importance of our TMRA Member industries to Texas. We certainly have our “challenges,” but we are strong in our resolve and our efforts as a TEAM. A very significant aspect of our success on many levels is that those with careers in Texas mining are committed to the companies for which they work, their day-to-day work teams, their communities, families and faith. I am constantly amazed and humbled by the strength, dedication, training and level of knowledge of our TMRA Members. I am certainly proud that I’ve been given the opportunity to work with and serve these people, companies and industries.

As a major focus of this magazine is education, let me speak to that. TMRA, rightfully, is proud of our education programs, our outreach, our participation in and with our communities and our state. Education on many levels is a top TMRA priority. Our TMRA Teacher Workshops, focused on each of our industry areas of mining, are outstanding. This past summer I had the privilege, once again, of participating. More importantly, I saw Francye Hutchins and her team in action with a number of Texas teachers, from The Sabine Mine to the Jewett Mine to the Three Oaks Mine. This was followed by Corpus, where teachers were introduced to our in situ uranium TMRA Owner/Operators and its recovery and processing method. I missed the Industrial Minerals week this year but have had feedback on how well that was received by the teachers. In each case and each week, what we see is “education” in the very best sense of the word.

If you check Wikipedia for the definition of “education,” you find “the process of facilitating learning or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and habits.” For TMRA, our focus is on the facilitation part of learning, making very sure we provide information and examples, and not presenting our information with bias or misinformation. In some respects, this isn’t easy, as we ARE biased toward our industries and how we conduct our business. We can and we do, however, present our information and training in a way that is transparent and honest because we know that, given ALL of the information of relevance, those open to education will understand and appreciate the value of our industries and the positive results from responsible mining, reclamation, construction, energy development and use.

As most of you know, our education and outreach efforts are constant, ongoing and go beyond our TMRA Teacher Workshops to include our efforts with and before state agencies, such as the Railroad Commission of Texas and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. Also very important are trade associations like the National Mining Association, Texas Aggregates and Concrete Association, Uranium Producers of America, Rocky Mountain Coal Mining Institute and Balanced Energy for Texas, to name a few. Our associations and critical issues also take us into state and national rulemaking initiatives and, more often than we would hope necessary, litigation. While we have limited financial resources, our members, knowing the importance of being involved and engaged, step up when asked and challenged.

Another resource that we have called upon and that has helped TMRA and its members immensely over the last few years has been the work of Christian Goff and her Pure Energy PR team. Our TMRA leadership and members have realized that, as issues and challenges have arisen, how, when and how effectively we engage and respond with our message can be the difference between our long-term success and misinformation and/or missed opportunities. I am so very grateful that I’ve had that expertise and commitment on which to draw. That has only been possible because of the TMRA leadership team and, for sure, TMRA member support through membership dues, sponsorships, and our always tremendous annual meeting attendance and auction support.

—Ches

**TMRA Annual Meeting this Month!**

**Oct. 30-Nov. 1, 2016 Hyatt Regency Lost Pines Resort & Spa, Bastrop, Texas**

It’s that time again: time for our annual casual, informative meeting for TMRA Owner/Operators, Support Members, exhibitors and visitors to mix and mingle, make new contacts and network with established contacts. A very popular part of this meeting is our TMRA Auction. If you would like to contribute an item or service (we hope you will), please contact Cathy Wright at cathy.wright@luminant.com. If you need help with meeting registration, please contact Cathy Pierce at cathy.pierce@tmra.com.
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Energy Policy Network is a national advocacy organization supporting the continued use of coal for the generation of electricity. EPN works hand-in-hand with local, state and national leaders and constituencies to fight the war on coal. EPN is bringing together an army of individuals and businesses who work together to counter the anti-coal movement.

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New technologies have transformed everything in our society. Mining is no exception, with changes in software, design and engineering creating a more efficient yet more complex industry that is making new demands on the workforce. Science, technology, engineering and mathematics-based education (STEM) and training needs to begin early. We interviewed Mark Russell, CEO of Russell & Sons – which performs large coal/lignite mining reclamation projects in five states – to learn more about these developments and how future professionals can prepare for this dynamic industry.

Q: What are the newest technologies that Russell & Sons is using for reclamation?
A. I would say it’s a combination of adapting software technologies for new uses that we’re calling “visualization,” which includes the evolution of the drone to improve our traditional aerial flight needs. We are dramatically improving the visualization quality of our 3D reclamation designs by using computer gaming technology, rather than the graphics of our traditional engineering software. We still use engineering software platforms for the technical design, but then import them into graphic 3D model software that affords us greater flexibility and more creative visualization options.

Q. Has this improved your reclamation efforts?
A. Our main objective is to produce much more realism into the post-mine landscapes we develop to better facilitate understanding of the final product. Traditional engineering design software often leaves room for misinterpretation of how the reclamation design will look and function. We want to ‘paint the picture’ of the physical design, rather than leave people with the ‘conceptual.’ Reclamation is a balance of art and science, which allows us to meet both regulatory compliance and a customer’s objectives.

Q. From ‘old school’ photography to drones…that’s quite a development.
A. Our first reclamation project manager was a B-17 lead navigator in WWII who had flown 43 bombing missions during the war. Jake got the idea of cutting a hole in my Dad’s 1964 Piper airplane so they could shoot photos. Analyzing the photography relied on new cutting-edge HP workstation and digitizer, and of course, we had to program our own estimating methods and cost management reporting. At that time the computer hardware alone cost a staggering $60K! There have been a lot of advancements in orthographic surveying and in the evolution of LiDAR survey technology over the last 35 years, but cost effectiveness and quick turnaround time is the name of the game. We recently invested about $250k in the hardware and processes needed to support our drone technology services, which has dramatically increased the accuracy and speed of our survey information, as it has added much higher image quality. The net result is that the newer technology better enables us to effectively design, estimate and manage project costs.

“Reclamation is a balance of art and science, which allows us to meet both regulatory compliance and a customer’s objectives.”

“Our first reclamation project manager was a B-17 lead navigator in WWII who had flown 43 bombing missions.”

This computer analysis of a Russell & Sons reclamation project shows the substantial technological advances that have resulted in constant improvement of software, machinery and procedures in the mining industry. Source: Russell & Sons
Q. How do you think STEM education prepares students for mining careers?
A. Let me preface this question by saying that people tend to only recognize the basic types of technological improvements in our industry. As mature as the mining industry is, there are constant improvements in materials and electronics that improve machinery life and performance. Advancements in information systems and user-friendly devices such as GPS will continue to evolve and improve labor and management efficiencies. But those are the baseline results of technological improvements. Technology means constant improvement of software, machinery and procedures. STEM is really about enabling and fostering critical thinking and collaboration via technologies that facilitate creative results. It’s about teaching kids how to solve problems instead of where to find the answers. As it relates to careers in our industry, the fundamental elements of STEM education are the same key drivers that produce the great results you see in mining reclamation throughout Texas. The reclamation process is a collaborative effort of many people of both engineering and applied science disciplines, utilizing the best available technologies.

Q. What kinds of future employees are you looking for?
A. I’d say the future of mining – or any successful industry – depends on inquisitive and collaborative people who have learned how to think and develop solutions. I don’t think STEM is too lofty of a goal, or just a buzz word. It’s a critical building block needed in American education to assure our ability to compete in a global marketplace.

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3D technology affords Russell & Sons greater flexibility and more creative visualization options when developing reclamation projects for its mining clients. Source: Russell & Sons
Texas weather can be unpredictable. No one knows that better than the employees of Luminant’s Three Oaks Mine, which supplies lignite to the company’s nearby Sandow Power Plant in Milam County. Throughout 2015, crews experienced extreme rain due to “super” El Niño weather conditions. The mine is now switching gears, as Texas enters into a drier La Niña pattern.

Last year, however, Three Oaks Mine received nearly 70 inches of rain – more than 200 percent of the average rainfall ever recorded for the area. This dramatic increase in rainfall led to operational challenges at the mine, which responded with innovative solutions to the rain.

“There was a two-month period in late 2015 where we had 35 pumps running to help move more than one billion gallons of water from our pits and production areas,” said Michael Morriss, Three Oaks Mine director. “The biggest challenge we faced was the inability to catch our breath before the next big rain event. With safety top-of-mind, our team worked tirelessly throughout wet and muddy conditions to ensure we could supply quality fuel to our Sandow plant.”

With El Niño ending, operations are back to normal at Three Oaks Mine and the team is taking the opportunity to soak in lessons learned following the rain streak.

“We’ve been able to step back after the extreme wet months and really assess our strengths and weaknesses,” said Morriss. “Although the heat brings its own set of challenges, dry summer months are our best production months. This is the time when we can provide our highest quality fuel to Sandow plant to help us achieve our goal of powering Texas safely and reliably during the peak demand season.”

Even in the midst of record-breaking rain or scorching summer temperatures, Three Oaks Mine employees are committed to keeping their focus on safety.

“Our Luminant safety program is called Safety Zero, which means we strive for zero incidents, accidents or near misses. We achieve this by routinely using our safety tools and processes and by looking out for ourselves and our co-workers,” Morriss said. “Throughout these weather events, we all pulled together as a team to find solutions. I truly believe that our employees’ perseverance, dedication and integrity is second to none.”

In 2014, Three Oaks Mine was Luminant’s first mine to receive the National Mining Association’s most prestigious recognition – the Sentinels of Safety Award. The team earned the award for working approximately 620,000 hours without a lost-time injury.

As a whole, Luminant’s mining team also achieved the lowest injury rate in the nation among the largest mining companies, according to a review of the 2015 MSHA Recordable Injury Rates. Luminant mining is the largest mining company in Texas and the ninth largest in the United States.
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William A. McElrake,1 Ernest L. Myers,1 Michael Savitt,1 Eugene A. Muth,2 and Earle H. Andrew1

1Virginia Department of Health, Roanoke Office, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Roanoke, Virginia; 2Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine, Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Buena Vista, Virginia.
What do you do?
As an environmental scientist for HDR, I help our clients evaluate environmental and regulatory issues for their projects. My primary area is regulatory compliance and restoration of wetlands and other waters of the U.S.

I became interested in wetland restoration as a student at Texas A&M University and was able to study wetland restoration techniques on the Big Brown Mine with assistance from the Texas Utilities (now Luminant) Environmental Fellowship. My research evaluated use of submerged aquatic vegetation and seed bank soil from a donor wetland to help restore high-functioning wetlands and waterfowl habitat in a reclaimed surface mine setting. I’ve continued working with plant communities and wildlife habitat at HDR, and previously as a biologist for Texas Parks and Wildlife.

What is your favorite part of the job?
My friends would tell you I was lying if I said spending time in wetlands in rubber boots wasn’t my favorite part of the job. It is. During my 16 years with HDR, I’ve been fortunate to work on a variety of projects and places, yet I still truly enjoy working on mining projects and reclamation planning in Texas’ Post Oak Savannah region.

It is especially rewarding when I am able to work with a team of diverse environmental and engineering professionals to help tackle regulatory and design challenges. We develop a creative approach that allows projects to move forward while minimizing environmental impacts and helping restore wetlands.

Why is your role important to the mining industry in Texas?
People in the Texas mining industry understand the complexities and challenges of numerous environmental regulatory requirements. My goal is to help our clients and project teams find cost-effective solutions to meet these regulations. With the increasing focus on functional replacement of wetlands and streams in Clean Water Act Section 404 mitigation, my background in wetland restoration on mines, and my understanding of the Fort Worth District’s Texas Rapid Assessment Method (TXRAM), is helpful to our clients. My experience as HDR’s project manager for development of TXRAM Versions 1.0 and 2.0, and its application for Section 404 Permits and mitigation projects, is important in helping the mining industry work toward aligning the Railroad Commission of Texas reclamation requirements with ever-changing mitigation requirements for waters of the U.S.

What would you tell a young person interested in pursuing this field?
The most valuable skill a student can develop is to work as part of a team. The mining industry and regulatory compliance requirements are always changing. It is just the nature of the business. If you approach each task and project as a challenge a team can solve through creativity and cooperation, it will help you succeed. Secondly, if you are interested in learning about the environmental field, take as many grass and plant identification classes as you can while close to an herbarium and dissecting scopes! It is a skill that will pay off as you begin working on ecological investigations and environmental challenges.
What do you do?

As a geological engineer working for two of the mines where Kiewit provides mining services, I am responsible for our geologic models. I plan and coordinate exploration programs so that we may define the structure and quality of future mining areas. With information collected from our exploration programs, geological models are created to reflect the most up-to-date information. When drilling season is over, I maintain the geological models and work on mining engineering projects. In the past I have worked on dragline, regrade, dozer pushes and various short-range projects. The mining engineering work I do is based on where the team needs me.

What is your favorite part of the job?

Learning. I love the people, the challenges, the team work and most things really. How much I’ve learned working in my position really amazes me. I started full-time just over two years ago with three internships before that. I am who I am today because of what I learned from the people around me, from the challenges I overcame (and the ones I failed), and from being part of a functional team and just taking it day by day. I became a better person in so many ways and will continue to grow, all thanks to what I learn everyday working in the mining industry. I just absolutely love that.

Why is your role important to the mining industry in Texas?

Mining requires extensive planning and accurate execution. We all want to do things right the first time and do a quality job. I consider myself the base of the mining industry. I create a map with structural and quality details that allows mining engineers to plan so that our workers can execute it. I also have a part in the planning stages, which means I help our workers provide that quality product. Every role is important; otherwise our chain would break and we’d all fall apart.

What would you tell a young person interested in pursuing this field?

That it’s great! Get ready to really learn and be amazed. The mining industry is such a great place for a career because it’s so diverse and you get immersed in it right away.

At a younger age, even mid-college, it’s hard for most individuals to picture what they want to do for the rest of their lives.

Mining has it all. You can start out in any position and aim to become whatever you want. You learn and see things you never thought of and your mind becomes open to brand new possibilities. And the best part, you’ll never stop growing.
What do you do?

I started out in mining in 1982 as a young civil design engineer responsible for pond and road designs. Then I moved to mine planning as well as a little geologic modeling. Eventually, that led me to this position. I am responsible for permitting submittals and compliance reporting for the Jewett Mine. I work with consultants and mine personnel to stay ahead of mining changes to maintain regulatory compliance. I think having worked through the engineering assignments gives me an understanding of the needs of the mine as a whole.

What is your favorite part of the job?

I love the people I work with and their commitment to doing their jobs effectively and proficiently. The satisfaction of accomplishing goals is greater than I ever expected. We take pride in doing our part to provide power to Texans and to restore the land for their future use.

Why is your role important to the mining industry in Texas?

Permitting is the facilitator of mine planning. We work with the mine engineers to ensure that their work meets state and federal regulations so that there won’t be barriers to accomplishing those plans. At the same time, we are working toward achieving bond release so that all our landowners can resume use of their property.

What would you tell a young person interested in pursuing this field?

Mining is a challenging field. You can expect to work long, hard hours. Don’t do it if you are afraid to get physically dirty! At the same time, the potential for satisfaction and the pay are good.

What do you do?

As an environmental specialist at Luminant’s Three Oaks Mine in Lee and Bastrop Counties, my primary responsibilities include regulatory compliance, as well as mine reclamation activities. Surface coal mining comes with a wide range of state and federal permits that are very detailed and unique to each individual mining operation. The environmental department at each mine serves as a support system for the operations, maintenance and engineering departments to ensure all mining-related activities are conducted in accordance with each of the required permits. Additionally, I am responsible for overseeing the reclamation activities of each specific mining area. This includes all land management activities, beginning with recently mined soil suitability verification to revegetation based on a pre-determined post-mine land use – and eventually the final stages of successful reclamation standards.

What is your favorite part of the job?

I appreciate the environmental opportunities that the mining process creates. Not only is mining lignite necessary to power Texas homes and businesses, but it also creates some very beneficial environmental opportunities that would not exist otherwise. The surface mining process allows us to restore potentially degraded acreage to a more productive state than before it was mined. This is achieved through avenues such as wetland mitigation and post-mine vegetation standards. Few other industries allow for the opportunity to work directly with state regulators and research agencies on such heavily managed large continuous acreage areas. And the best part is that I get to combine my professional expertise with my love of the environment.

Why is your role important to the mining industry in Texas?

With the demand for power on the rise, I’m proud to work for a company with a longstanding tradition of environmental excellence. Luminant is committed to powering Texas through safe, reliable and environmentally sustainable operations. Environmental specialists help ensure that the mining process can continue and provide essential and unique environmental benefits long after the fuel has been mined.

What would you tell a young person interested in pursuing this field?

I recommend that college students seek internship opportunities, which is how I began my career at Luminant. There are multiple opportunities with mining companies, as well as consulting companies that support mining operations. Having a good educational record will help land these internships. When you pair a good GPA with internship experience, the combination will be instrumental in pursuing full-time positions.
The program of work for the TMRA Education Committee in 2016 included the following to help expand the role of the education program beyond teacher workshops.

We are working with the communications group to develop standardized talking points and communications packets, as well as a speaker’s bureau, to help us spread the word about TMRA and the industry. This is in the early stages of development and will continue into 2017.

We designed and purchased new displays for use at trade shows and other events, such as CAST, to promote our education programs and the TMRA Teacher Workshops.

We developed a succession plan to ensure the continued success of the program. The plan includes identification, training and development of instructors for summer workshops and our staff development training program, as well as a succession plan for the education director position. The education director created a workshop manual to assist in maintaining continuity.

We created an alternate funding option to augment the TMRA Annual Meeting Auction, which currently finances education outreach and teacher workshops. This includes a teacher sponsorship program where individuals and companies can sponsor a teacher for $1,500 to cover the cost of attendance at our workshops. The “Sponsor-a-Teacher” program will give more TMRA Members the opportunity to help support the education program. If approved, the program will be implemented in early 2017.

These and other exciting plans – including the possibility of a podcast and an app – will allow us to expand and enhance the TMRA education program.
The best way to learn is to do. At five TMRA Teacher Workshops this summer, nearly 100 teachers saw for themselves how Texas’ natural resources are mined and used to make our everyday lives better.

That brings to more than 1,500 classroom teachers – from fourth grade through high school – who have attended TMRA Teacher Workshops since its inception in 1991. This translates to more than one million students who have heard the ‘real story’ of mining from teachers who have learned the facts firsthand.

At the three coal workshops, teachers saw how lignite is mined and used to provide reliable, low-cost electricity. Attendees observed how the land is restored to even better condition than before mining operations, while touring reclaim areas at North American Coal Corporation’s Sabine Mine, Texas Westmoreland Coal’s Jewett Mine and Luminant’s Three Oaks Mine.

The Industrial Minerals workshop partnered with Texas A&M University-Commerce to provide opportunities for 24 teachers to visit working quarries and see how sand, gravel and stone mined in Texas is used to make our modern life possible. They also toured UT’s Bureau of Economic Geology’s Core Repository and visited UT’s Texas Advanced Computer Center – housing one of the world’s most powerful computers.

For the nuclear workshop, 18 teachers came to Corpus Christi to visit the mining and plant operations at Energy Fuels Resources Alta Mesa project and learned how uranium provides electricity. Presenters from Uranium Energy Corporation and Uranium Resources Inc. talked to the teachers about the environmental issues and the future of the uranium industry. South Texas Nuclear Project Operating Company explained how mined uranium is enriched and used to make electricity.

At all five workshops, facilitators presented hands-on activities that are aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and the STARR test, helping to ensure the Texas mining industry will be depicted factually and objectively in the classroom.
**Teacher Focus**

**Mining Education Begins in the Classroom**

**Dallas Teacher**

**Heather Wood**

on TMRA Teacher Workshops

The TMRA Teacher Workshops that the association runs every summer are a highly-recognized and award-winning outreach venture. The week-long workshops host teachers from across the state to enjoy hands-on learning and a science-based curriculum that teaches facts about mining in Texas. But the highlight of the week is always the visit to our member company mines and power plants. The hospitality, integrity and thoroughness of our hosts at these companies never fail to impress. Here we asked Dallas science teacher Heather Wood – who wrote a blog about her experience while there – to tell us about her participation at the TMRA Teacher Workshop that took educators to the North American Coal’s Sabine Mine in June.

Q. What school do you teach at, what grade and what subject?
I teach 8th grade science at E. B. Comstock Middle School in the Dallas Independent School District.

Q. How long have you been a teacher?
I have been in education for 11 years. I have been involved in different facets of science education: education programs for the Dallas Zoo and professional development at the Perot Museum of Science and Nature, as well as a classroom teacher.

Q. Why did you enter the teaching profession?
I entered teaching because I wanted to share my passion for science and nature.

Q. What motivates you to teach?
My biggest motivation for teaching is the knowledge that I know I am having an impact on our future: the students I reach every year.

Q. What is your favorite thing about teaching?
Watching my students’ curiosity about the natural world grow.

Q. Did you know much about mining in the U.S. before you took the TMRA Teacher Workshop?
I knew very basic information about mining in the U.S., but not much about the reclamation process. That part was very new to me.

Q. What is the most important thing you learned during the TMRA Teacher Workshop?
The most important thing I learned during the teacher workshop is how important coal is as an energy source and to our economy. Bottom line is the coal mining industry is very misunderstood. You must educate yourself on the mining process from beginning to end and the role coal plays in the energy mix in Texas for providing electricity. After all, don’t you enjoy a cool house during the height of our Texas summers and heat during the winter-time when you need it? I know I do, and now I know a bit more about where this necessary energy comes from, which I will share with my students this year.

Q. Can you discuss the value of hands-on learning?
Hands-on learning is an integral component in the science classroom. I walked away with many new labs to implement for my earth science units.

Q. Would you recommend the TMRA Teacher Workshops to other teachers?
Yes, definitely! The facilitators are excellent educators and the mine staff is amazing. But I think what I enjoyed most was the camaraderie and friendships I made with the other Texas science teachers. It was a very valuable experience!

Keep up with Heather’s blog at https://texascamping.wordpress.com/2016/07/05/educate-yourself/

"You must educate yourself on the mining process and the role coal plays in the energy mix in Texas for providing electricity."
Come join **TMRA’s 31st Annual Meeting**

SUNDAY
[**OCT. 30**]

- Continuing Education
  - PE and PG Courses

- Committee Meeting
  - Industrial Minerals

- Welcome Reception

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MONDAY
[**OCT. 31**]

- GOLF

- FISHING

- Fun Night!
  - Legislative Recognition

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TUESDAY
[**NOV. 1**]

- General Meeting
  - Confirmed Speakers:
    - RCT Executive Director Kim Corley
    - RCT SMRD Director Denny Kingsley

- Legal Panel
  - Ty Embrey, Lloyd Gosselink
  - Mike Nasi, Jackson Walker

- New Member Presentations
- Safety Recognitions

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**2016 TMRA ANNUAL MEETING**

Oct. 30 – Nov. 1, 2016

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Bastrop, Texas

*Fun Night is on Halloween!
Come dressed as your favorite ghost or goblin and you might get a treat!*

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Expertise in the Field Creates Uptime for a Dragline
By Brittney Thomas, L&H Marketing Manager

Draglines are some of the biggest machines on earth. Maintaining these massive earth movers requires the expertise and know-how to get the job done right. Servicing large equipment is what L&H has done for more than 50 years. We know a quality part doesn’t end after manufacturing or repair; it carries out into the field when the part is installed on the machine. Thoughtful assembly and installation processes are critical, as well as safety awareness and pre-job risk assessments out in the field. With safety and efficiency top of mind and expert tradesman, L&H’s field service team excels at servicing any large machine.

Safe, efficient and experienced

In North Dakota, L&H recently serviced two 2570 draglines; the team performed world-class work in record time. A swing rack change-out was completed in only 21 days without undocking the machine. Working around the clock to replace each of the 12 gear segments, they were then aligned to the center pin using innovative procedures. The modern technology and advanced methods used by the field service team maintained high-quality specifications and extreme tolerances on the job; while additionally completing the outage in well under the timeframe with zero injuries or incidents.

A second outage, consisting of a propel repair on a 2570, involved the removal of a propel cam and shaft to replace the main propel bull gear and third intermediate pinions. The customer’s machine suffered a catastrophic failure of the propel bull gear; so L&H crews were called in. Once the machine was disassembled, the damaged components were removed and repair work began. The L&H field team was able to get the machine back up and running four days sooner than the customer’s projected timeline. Once again: a job done safely and efficiently without injuries or incidents.

Big machines mean big repairs

L&H Industrial has become known for its expertise in the field, years of experience and a team that has worked together for years. This is what Marley Ziegler, field service manager, believes has created such a competitive advantage in the field. “L&H’s field service team is a group that has been together for a long time,” says Ziegler, “with an understanding of how important it is for the customer to get what we promised. We all understand how tough the coal market is today and we want to do our part to make things work. This happens through a lot of pre-planning with the customers and our field service team; making sure all the bases are covered from safety to tools and procedure.”

To handle these large outages and repairs on giant machines, L&H’s field service team has to make sure they have the best tools for the job; they have invested in new technology to create safer and more efficient operations out in the field.

Gary Collins, a key supervisor on the recent dragline outage noted: “During these large outages and repairs, a big part of our success was due to the use of custom and specialized tooling to make the work more efficient, as well as pre-job inspections and preparations. Without this tooling and preparation, these jobs could have extended beyond the customers’ allowed timeline.”

Collins added, “L&H takes pride in taking on projects that have either never been done before or that have historically been performed in one way and one way only. Sometimes the customer needs a non-typical repair that many service companies are not willing to provide; L&H is up for the challenge.”

L&H has invested heavily in its training and technology to ensure safe and efficient operations on draglines, one of the world’s biggest and most complicated machines. Source: L&H

"The L&H field team was able to get the machine back up and running four days sooner than the customer’s projected timeline."
HOLT CAT® Names Bert Fulgium Senior Vice President of Product Support

HOLT CAT® (www.holtcat.com), the Caterpillar® equipment and engine dealer for South, Central, North and Northeast Texas, announced that Robert “Bert” Fulgium is now senior vice president, Product Support.

“Exciting changes are taking place at HOLT CAT,” said Peter John Holt, the company’s EVP and general manager. “Appointing Bert will further enhance our parts and services functions, which is largely considered the backbone of this company. The needs of our customers are of utmost importance; therefore, these operational changes will further our commitment to Legendary Customer Service.”

Fulgium previously served as vice president of Machine Product Support. In his new role, he will continue to lead this division, in addition to supporting the Power Systems Division (PSD), creating a single Product Support organization for all service and parts across all Caterpillar and AGCO product lines.

Fulgium began his career with HOLT CAT in 2002. He earned a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from LeTourneau University and a Master of Business Administration degree from Texas A&M University-Commerce.
Kingsley Named SMRD Director

James “Denny” Kingsley has joined the executive leadership team of the Surface Mining and Reclamation Division (SMRD), which is part of the Railroad Commission of Texas. Denny began serving as its director in July. Denny has more than 36 years of experience in surface mining, serving in both technical and executive leadership roles and brings a wealth of experience and great ideas to his new responsibilities at the commission. In his previous role as president and general manager of Texas Westmoreland’s Jewett Mine facility, Denny was responsible for overseeing all aspects of the operation, including production, engineering, safety and environmental compliance. In addition to his B.S. in Civil Engineering, Denny has completed post graduate work in Six Sigma and Strategic Organization Development and has applied that know-how in leading operating studies that reduced costs and increased efficiencies, all while emphasizing a safety-based culture. “Denny has served extensively in leadership roles at TMRA and we are very proud of his new position at the Surface Mining Reclamation Division,” says TMRA Executive Director Ches Blevins. “We wish him good luck in his new role at the Railroad Commission of Texas.”

Energy Fuels Acquires Mesteña Uranium

Energy Fuels Inc., a leading producer of uranium in the United States has completed its acquisition of Mesteña Uranium, LLC, and its Alta Mesa Uranium Project located in Brooks County, Texas. Alta Mesa is one of the main in situ uranium recovery (ISR) facilities in the U.S., and was an important supplier of uranium to global markets between 2005 and 2013 (when it was placed on standby).

Paul Goranson, executive vice president of ISR Operations for Energy Fuels, will oversee the Alta Mesa project, in addition to Energy Fuels’ Nichols Ranch ISR project located in northeast Wyoming. Peter Luthiger has been named Energy Fuels’ director of Texas Operations.

Alta Mesa is currently being maintained in order to resume production as uranium market prices improve in the coming years. The project can reach commercial production levels with limited required capital within six months of a positive production decision. At full capacity, Alta Mesa is capable of producing 1.5 million pounds of uranium per year.

Alta Mesa is expected to diversify Energy Fuels’ operations and provide the company with a third production center, along with Nichols Ranch and the White Mesa Mill in Southeast Utah, which is the only conventional uranium mill operating in the U.S. Additionally, Energy Fuels now has more licensed and operational processing capacity (11.5+ million pounds of uranium per annum) than any other uranium producer in the U.S.

It is important to note that the U.S. has the largest nuclear fleet in the world, with 99 operating nuclear reactors, and is the largest consumer of uranium in the world today. Additionally, Alta Mesa is of particular importance in today’s current uranium price environment, as the costs of production at the facility are expected to become one of the lowest within Energy Fuels’ portfolio. As uranium markets improve, Alta Mesa offers significant production scalability to Energy Fuels that can be brought online sooner and at lower uranium prices.
HOLT CAT® opened a new facility in San Antonio. From left to right: Dave Harris, president and COO, HOLT CAT; Tommy Calvert, Bexar county commissioner; Rebecca Viagran, SA District 3 city councilwoman; Peter J. Holt, EVP and general manager, HOLT CAT; San Antonio Mayor Ivy Taylor; Bexar County Judge Nelson Wolff; and Corinna Holt Richter, EVP and chief administrative officer, HOLT CAT. Source: HOLT CAT.

HOLT CAT®, the Caterpillar® Equipment and Engine dealer for South, Central, North and Northeast Texas, broke ground on a new state-of-the-art headquarters building at its campus on the southeast side of San Antonio. This prominent new facility will help the company better support business growth, and also provide a more productive and fulfilling work environment for employees. State, county and local dignitaries, such as Mayor Ivy Taylor and Judge Nelson Wolff, were present to commemorate this significant moment with HOLT employees and leadership.

Despite its large presence in other parts of the state, HOLT remained firm to its roots. Located in San Antonio since 1933, HOLT made the decision to stay in San Antonio after finalizing an incentive agreement between county and local authorities that allowed the company to expand through a $20.2 million real estate and property investment, and the creation of 195 headquarter jobs.

Mayor Ivy Taylor celebrated the groundbreaking stating, “HOLT CAT is a great example of what economic development can and should be in San Antonio. A family-owned business of national stature and global reach, located on the southeast side of San Antonio, HOLT CAT has chosen to reinvest in this community, expand its workforce and continue to contribute to the quality of life of San Antonians.”

The new, three-story headquarters will include integrated technology, large conference rooms, cafeteria, gym, campus improvements and energy efficient and sustainable features. The modernized building will help the company evolve with the dynamic needs of the industries HOLT serves in its 118-county territory across North, Central, South and Southeast Texas.

“We are proud to show our continued investment in the San Antonio community,” said Peter John Holt, EVP and general manager. “The city has been home to our family’s company since 1933, and this addition to our headquarters ensures that San Antonio will remain our home for generations to come.” HOLT will continue its strong commitment to serving the communities and businesses across Texas from the Red River to the Rio Grande, where HOLT has been a dealer for more than 80 years.

Industrial Lubricant Company is pleased to announce the addition of Brian Granger as Texas division manager in its Tyler, Texas branch office. Brian will be responsible for managing all aspects of the Texas branch. Brian was previously a mechanical engineer/maintenance supervisor with Cloud Peak Energy in Gillette, Wyoming, and earlier with Broadway Holdings in Sheridan, Wyoming as a R&D project manager. Brian is a Sheridan, Wyoming native and graduate of Big Horn High School prior to earning his Bachelor’s Degree in Engineering at the University of Wyoming.
***MEETINGS AND EVENTS***

**TMRA 2016 QUARTERLY MEETINGS**

*Oct. 30*  TMRA Board of Directors Meeting (during Annual Meeting)

*Nov. 30*  Environmental Committee, Task Force Lunch & Meeting

*Dec. 1*  Lignite, Uranium and Executive Committees

**Oct. 30-Nov. 1 TMRA Annual Meeting**

**NON-TMRA EVENTS**

*Oct. 6-7*  Surface Mine Reclamation Workshop

*Check www.tmra.com for a full schedule.*

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**Get out and Vote!**

Have you heard? There’s a U.S. presidential election this fall. **Tuesday, Nov. 8 is Election Day**, when some very important issues to the mining industry will be decided by virtue of which candidate is chosen. Be sure to get out there and register your choice. More than ever this year, every vote counts!
Board of Directors

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Industrial Minerals Committee Chair: Matt Hallmark,
Trinity Construction Materials, Inc.
Uranium Committee Chair: Craig Wall, Uranium Energy Corporation
Member: Jeff Mason, Luminant
Executive Director: Ches Blevins, Texas Mining and Reclamation Association

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Industrial Minerals Committee Chair: Matt Hallmark,
Trinity Construction Materials, Inc.
Uranium Committee Chair: Craig Wall, Uranium Energy Corporation

Functional
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Education: Robert Gentry, Luminant
Environmental: Josh McAfee, Sabine Mine
Governmental Affairs: Gene Jernigan, Energy Future Holdings
Membership: Frank Pagura, WPI
Nominating: Mike Altavilla, Texas Westmoreland Coal - Jewett Mine
Planning: Cathy Pierce, Texas Mining and Reclamation Association
Safety: Steven Schauwecker, Luminant

TMRA Board of Directors
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Editorial Calendar

Winter 2016
Year in Review

TMRA Committee Chairmen/women will recap the year and take a look ahead. This is a digital report that will be posted online in December. Print editions of TXMining will resume in Spring 2017. Contact Lance Lawhon for print and digital advertising opportunities.

You can access electronic copies of the magazine anytime on the TMRA website at http://www.tmra.com/texas-mining-magazine
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