



**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**  
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## **Mine Rescue Teams Showcase Life-Saving Skills at Annual Competition**

*For a full photo gallery, [click here](#).*

**RICHMOND, VA** — Nine mine rescue teams from Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Illinois gathered in Abingdon on May 5–7 to put their emergency response skills to the test in one of the Commonwealth’s most important mine safety training events.

“Every drill, every simulated rescue, is about one thing: bringing every miner home safe,” said Virginia Energy Acting Director Michael Skiffington. “These teams are a critical safety net for Virginia’s coal communities, and their preparation helps protect miners and families across the Commonwealth.”

Hosted by Virginia Energy in partnership with the National Mine Rescue Association Post 7, the Metallurgical Coal Producers Association, and the Mine Safety and Health Administration, the event featured both the 39th Annual Governor’s Cup and the 4th Annual Overmountain Mine Rescue Competition.

Over three days, teams tackled realistic underground emergency scenarios designed to sharpen coordination, decision-making, and technical rescue skills. Competitors trained in simulated mine emergencies, including rescuing trapped miners, restoring ventilation, suppressing fires, and operating safely in full breathing apparatus. Additional events tested individual skills in first aid, equipment diagnostics, air monitoring, and pre-shift inspections.

“We hope these teams are never needed in a real emergency, but regular training and competitions like this ensure they are ready if that day comes,” said Virginia Energy Director of Coal Programs Randy Moore. “Worker safety remains this agency’s top priority.”

### **Top Awards from the 2026 Competition:**

- Grand Champion: Alpha Metallurgical Resources–Southern West Virginia
- Governor’s Cup Mine Rescue: Alpha Metallurgical Resources–Paramont Contura
- Overmountain Mine Rescue: Alpha Metallurgical Resources–Southern West Virginia
- Pre-shift Inspection: Alpha Metallurgical Resources–Paramont Contura
- First Aid: Alpha Metallurgical Resources–Southern West Virginia
- BG-4 Bench: Iron Synergy Iron Blue Team
- Team Tech: Alpha Metallurgical Resources–Paramont Contura
- Biomarine Bench: Knight Hawk Coal Company
- Pro-Air Bench: Alpha Metallurgical Resources–Paramont Contura
- Combination: Alpha Metallurgical Resources–Southern West Virginia

“Bringing these contests together gives mine rescue teams more opportunities to compete, train, and learn from one another in a single event,” said MCPA President Ben Beakes. “That kind of shared experience pays off when seconds count and miners’ lives are on the line.”

“While these volunteer rescue miners compete intensely during the events, the true value comes afterward — building the trust, communication, and camaraderie essential during real mine emergencies,” said NMRA Post 7 President Vernon Johnson.

Competing teams present were Coronado Mine Buchanan Minerals Black and Red Teams, Iron Synergy Iron Blue Team, Knight Hawk Coal Company Black Team, Alpha Metallurgical Resources–Southern West Virginia Teams 1 and 2, Alpha Metallurgical Resources– Paramont Contura, Southern Pocahontas Inc. Apache Team, and Cumberland Coal Corporation Team.

Event sponsors included Jennmar, Drager, CSE Company, Innovative Wireless Technology, Industrial Scientific, Iron Synergy, West River Conveyors, Simmons Equipment, Strata Worldwide, Biomarine, Knight Hawk Coal Company, Alpha Metallurgical Resources, Cliffs Natural Resources Inc., and Coronado Global Resources Inc.

Photos from the event are available in an [online gallery](#).

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