



THE SPOKES SPEAK - GEARED TO SERVICE

Rotary Club of the North Fork Valley

POB 1543, Paonia, CO 81428

WEB SITES: www.rotary.org www.rotary5470.org www.paoniarotary.org

Meeting Thursdays at Noon in the Paonia Town Hall

District 5470

Club 1180 - Chartered 12/20/22

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LAST MEETING: December 13, 2018

Visiting Rotarian: Laura Derby from Virginia

Announcements:

- Caterers Phyllis and Ashley thanked with a standing ovation. This was their last lunch for us after 13+ years. Gift bags presented. Berg Harvest will be taking over.

Program: Arch Coal/West Elk Mine

John Poulos from Arch Coal spoke today. John was born and raised in Paonia, his Dad was Pete Poulos, the barber. John has been employed with Arch Coal/West Elk for 28 years. Every year the 3rd graders from Hotchkiss Elementary School take a tour of the mine.

Most of the underground mining is under US Forest Service Lands.

The goals of West Elk Mine are to:

- Maintain excellent environmental health and safety performance
 - No reportable injuries in 2013. West Elk has half the national average for injuries; mining has fewer injuries than farming and commercial fishing. They have had no environmental violations in the last several years.
 - MSHA (Mining Safety Health Association) citations have been and continue to be very low and mostly minor. They are only able to find violations about half the time when doing inspections.
 - West Elk Mine has received lots of awards and citations. They've had 19 years without an environmental violation.
- Establish and maintain high customer satisfaction.

West Elk does lots of community involvement.

Started mining F-Seam in 1982 with room and pillar.

They did B-Seam Long Wall mining from 1992 to 2008 and there were 88,000 tons of coal extracted. There are 4 panels remaining to be mined in the lowest mineable seam.

Currently they are in the E-Seam Long Wall mining from 2008 to present. The E-Seam is 270 feet above B-Seam and F-Seam is 90 feet above E-Seam.

The Long Wall mining machine is 1,100 feet long and can extract 90% of resources. West Elk is currently moving the Long Wall machine to a new panel. This takes all the staff to move so they are not producing during that time.

2012 6.9 Million tons max.

4.0-4.8 Million tons/year now

300 people are currently working at West Elk Mine

They recycle all water now.

Slide show of equipment was shown.

The coal miners at West Elk Mine do not breathe the coal dust.

Nitrogen is pumped into the mine to suppress fire and prevent explosions.

The coal preparation plant washes and prepares coal, is 9 stories tall, which is the tallest building in Gunnison County, and can do 800 tons per hour maximum. The plant has dry screening with a coal fines by-pass. The course coal (+3/8 inch) is washed via heavy media vessel and has blending capabilities. The use of on-line analyzers and 2-stage sampling system is used to control quality. The plant maximizes recoverable reserves from the Long Wall panels and gives improved product to customers.

There are lots of wildlife on the West Elk property.

The Motto for The West Elk Mine is: Home safely...every one...every day.

Experienced miners have gone and they are now hiring from an inexperienced worker pool. West Elk hired 80 people January 1, 2018 but John is not sure how many of them as still there as mining is not for everyone. Japan is building new coal plants (since Fukushima earthquake), as well as China and India. Lots of coal from Australia. About 50% of North Fork Valley coal is exported. Cement plants use lots of coal. It costs more to ship coal than to sell it. Currently the mines in China are like the mines were in the United States in the 1800's. They cannot grow fast enough to meet the demand.

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

- 1/3/19: DMEA - (James Schott)**
- 1/10/19: TBD - (Peggy Szvetcz)**
- 1/17/19: Krista Dudley - Formation of a Threshold Choir in Paonia (Greg Thompson)**
- 1/24/19: TBD – (SEI)**
- 1/31/19: 5th Thursday Pot Luck**
- 2/7/19: TBD – (Felix Belmont)**
- 2/14/19: TBD – (Bill Bishop)**
- 2/21/19: TBD – (Sarah Bishop)**
- 2/28/18: TBD – (Ed Bliss)**
- 3/7/19: TBD –(Pam Bliss)**
- 3/14/19: TBD –(Randy Campbell)**
- 3/21/19: Lori Lenhart from PACE (Karri Polson)**
- 3/28/19: TBD –(Susie Coombe)**

