

Plateau Mining Co.—a 'Beacon on the Hill'

Plateau Mining Company is a coal mine located in the red covered hills of Gentry Mountain. Twenty-one miles southwest of Price, Utah. The

company has been in business under the same name for almost 15 years and has grown to a labor force of some 330 employees.

Since July of 1980 Plateau has been part of Getty Oil Company's Minerals Division. Plateau is Getty's first operational underground coal mine and has remained the pacesetter in coal mining for the company. During the past two years, Getty's acquisition of additional coal properties is an indication of its interest in this fossil fuel.

Plateau is considered a "Beacon on the Hill." The lights on the recently completed overland belt, along with those of the yard and tippie area shine on through the night as a reminder that coal mining is alive and well at Plateau. The new beltline has also increased the company's efficiency in moving the coal from the mountain to the preparation plant.

Employees are proud to work for Plateau and feel a devotion to the company. "One month last spring," said Floyd Tucker, Plateau's mine manager, "our employees set out to shatter their own coal production record. On March 5, with excellent leadership and a tremendous team effort,

our employees mined 11,302 tons of coal within a 24-hour period, shattering their prior production record by almost 50 percent. That kind of effort comes from employees who feel good about their company. And we're proud of them."

Plateau is a very progressive company and this has certainly been enhanced by its affiliation with Getty. "Because we are a large organization," said J.D. Spaulding, Getty's Coal Department manager in Salt Lake City, Utah, "we are able to bring a wide variety of technologies from the company's exploration and production research lab in Houston, the Engineering Department and the Information Systems Group. An individual operator could not afford these resources. We are bringing a lot of horsepower to bear on technical problems associated with three-seam mining and adverse geological conditions. And it's all been done in a short time."

The company has experienced expansion and growth during 1982. "The

computer has become a very important element in business today," said Dennis Ware, controller at Plateau, "and we're no different. We are now in the process of converting all of our accounting functions to the computer and are looking forward to the added speed and accuracy it should provide." The Engineering Department also utilizes the computer for various technical projects, such as the upgrading of the mine ventilation system.

Longwall mining is one of the most innovative underground mining methods used in the coal industry today. Plateau has completed extensive engineering and geological studies to determine the feasibility of installing the longwall system. The studies have indicated conditions to be very conducive to longwalling. With the return of a strong coal market, the company could have "longwall coal" moving on its belts in 1984.

"Once the coal is out of the ground," said Danny Price, surface superintendent at Plateau, "we must have adequate methods of loading it into railcars. Our newly proposed unit train load-out system will give us the increased loading capacity we need to handle proposed production." Engineering studies are now under way to complete the pre-construction ground work.

The history of the coal market is known to be highly variable with periods of high and low demands for this fossil fuel. However, Getty is committed to being a major western coal producer and feels the demand for coal will increase in future years.

Plateau intends to do its part. "If we are prepared to supply high quality coal safely and as economically as possible, we will continue to be a major supplier of Utah's coal," said Tucker.



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A new record

Employees at Plateau Mining Co.'s coal mine at Wattis last year set a new production record — 11,302 tons from six sections.

The record was set by 12 shifts of workers between 11 p.m. March 4 and 11 p.m. March 5. It beat the mine's old record of 7,571 tons set Sept. 26, 1978, according to Floyd J. Tucker, vice president and general manager.