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AC 7/10/99 #2

ons and tons of black coal are piling up at the Willow Creek load out facility in Price Canyon. Although coal is exiting the mine, work continues toward accomplishing the company's purpose of preparing another panel for the long wall to be moved to and major production will start once again. This is all happening as plans are in place for Willow Creek Mine to be sold to RAG, a German coal production company on July 31.

Boylen details progress at Willow Creek

by KEVIN ASHBY
Sun Advocate publisher

At last, traveling north up Price Canyon, Carbon County residents can see huge piles of coal being mined by Willow Creek employees.

Getting the mine back up and running is only part of the workload as employees look at changing from ownership from Cyprus Amax to RAG as soon as July 31.

Mine superintendent John Boylen explained that the sale agreement was executed on May 13 and should close on July 31 if all regulatory approvals and other pre-closing requirements can be completed.

It is the intention of both companies that the transfer be as seamless and smooth as possible for employees, customers and other stakeholders.

To accomplish the objective, Cyprus Amax will provide a broad array of continuing services under a transition services agreement for up to one year.

To date, compensation and benefits questions have not been entirely addressed by RAG, but employees expected these explanations as soon as closing takes place.

The company will continue to operate out of the Englewood office. Eventually the headquarters will be relocated to the Annapolis/Baltimore area, but not before spring 2000.

A new company name has not yet been selected.

RAG is a German company with diversified interests in energy and technology. Until relatively recently it was better known as Ruhrkhole.

RAG's core business is coal including international coal trading and mining operations in Germany, Venezuela, Australia and West Virginia.

Currently, annual coal production by RAG group companies and subsidiaries totals more than 50 million tons. The West Virginia operations maintain an office in Charleston and produce about

seven million tons.

RAG is the largest producer of bituminous coal in Germany. With the purchase of Cyprus Amax, RAG will be one of the largest coal suppliers in the world with more than 110 million tons of annual production.

How much coal is the Willow Creek mine producing?

Boylen explained that although he is happy to be back mining coal, Willow Creek is a long wall coal mine and so all employees are doing now is preparing the mine to move the longwall over to a new section.

There are four continuous miners in operation presently.

(Continued on page

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Castle Valley happenings, news briefs ...

Check out the newspaper's website at www.wsa.com

Area volunteers prepare to rally in fight against cancer

Carbon County's 18-hour volunteer Relay for Life effort to fight cancer will take place at the CEU track on Friday and Saturday.

Opening ceremonies are planned Friday at 6 n.m. Guest speaker Dick Nourse will join cancer

Water meetings scheduled in Carbon, Emery counties

A series of public meetings are scheduled to gather public concerns, desires and thoughts on water use in the Colorado River Basin.

Local sessions are slated June 28 at 3 p.m. at Emery County and June 28 at 7 p.m. in the Car-

BLM pledges to accept WSA

The United States Bureau of Land Management indicates it will accept public input on the entire wilderness study area.

Send written comments to WSA Planning Project, PO B

Boylen details Willow Creek progress:

(Continued from page 1A)

One is coming into the old head gate of the D1 panel where the long wall is resting.

Five hundred feet to the east is another continuous miner opening another gate for the new D2 section.

The third miner is completing a circulation route further to the west and the fourth is starting on a new D3 section.

Boylen explained that when the miners get the ventilation routes completed around D2, the seal will be broken into D1 to expose the longwall. This should be ready the last of August. It is planned to have crews refurbish the long wall so that it is in working condition.

Crews will mine about 100 feet of coal to get the long wall perpendicular to the entrance into the new D2 section. This will take about a week.

The D1 section will then be sealed off and coal production with the long wall will begin in the D2 section sometime in November.

Normal longwall moves take

about four weeks. But the upcoming project at Willow Creek will take longer as shields and the cutting mechanism will all be moved.

The new D2 section will only be 500 feet wide rather than the usual 800 feet. Company officials are leaving the extra footage as a barrier between section D1 and D2.

"Everybody is watching us. In fact, we are really watching ourselves as we start up a long wall after a fire," explained Boylen on the plans to reactivate the long wall.

Currently, all 260 regular employees as well as 70 contractors are back to work at the mine.

Castle Valley Services has the contract to continue coal production at the Star Point mine, where 80 employees are running two sections there until a decision is made otherwise.

There has been one flare-up at Willow Creek that caused some excitement for a time.

Boylen explained that a belt roller got hot, but was detected during the normal checks by the fire bosses. It was small and was

contained before any damage was sustained.

"Right now we are more worried about getting the footage needed to meet the goal to get the long wall up and running than on actually producing coal," said Boylen. "This is a longwall coal mine and we need to get the long wall set up to mine coal, and that is what we are working on."

RAG will be purchasing the nation's fifth largest coal producer when it purchases Cyprus Amax Coal. There are nine coal mines in the United States. The company produces 62 million tons of coal annually in the United States, approximately 95 percent of which is used for electricity generation.

The coal company operates five underground mines utilizing leading-edge longwall technology. Two large surface mines are located in Wyoming's Powder River Basin.

The Willow Creek mine was designed to be a world-class, high capacity underground, longwall mine to meet the increasing demands of the export market.



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Issue halts:

(Continued from page 1A)

Cordova recommends that the issue be reviewed by the sheriff's posse board members to satisfy the demands of the constitution.

Although Cordova explains that no official stand will be taken on the issue by the county sheriff's department, he states the discrimination of any kind is incorrect.

"It doesn't matter if they are male, female, white or black, I think that you have to be equal in all aspects of the application process. You can not discriminate against an individual because she is female," emphasizes the Carbon County sheriff.

In response to the internal conflict invoked by the issue, Darlington has resigned his post with the sheriff's posse.

In addition, Madden has announced his resignation from his