

## 2 Youths Rescued From Shawnee Mine

By MEL HUTMIRE AND KATIE HOY

SHAWNEE — Two Shawnee youths, trapped in an abandoned mine shaft north of the Shawnee corporation limit for more than two hours Monday evening, were rescued about 9:15 p.m. by a special mine rescue team headed by State Mine Inspector Ralph Dean of Glouster.

The youths were identified as Allen Foley, 14, and Kenneth Eugene Gotke, 17, both of Shawnee.

They were trapped in an old truck mine on the Dave Lewis property some 300 feet deep in the shaft and 100 feet to the south of the main shaft in a small chamber, Perry County sheriff deputies said.

Chief Deputy Larry Hatem, Shawnee volunteer fireman Dale Compton and Dale Miller, along with Dean, uncovered some heavy rocks from the small slit entrance to the shaft and crawled back to inspect the ceiling which was "hanging precariously," according to the state mine inspector.

The men were able, however, to talk to the youths and to urge them to crawl "with precaution" toward them. The youths were pulled from the mine shaft about 9:15 p.m.

William Knight, 21, of Shawnee, a third member of the cave exploration group gave this account:

"All of us had gone to the old mine, as we did many times before, to camp out for the night. We brought camping gear with us.

"Gotke and Foley crawled

through the small mine entrance and back into the cave to set the gear in place. As they were making their way back to the room where we often stayed, I heard a large cracking sound.

"When they came out, I warned them not to go in again and said we would not camp for the night. They went back in to get the gear, some candles and flashlights.

"Then there was a huge rumble and the whole front of the mine shaft caved in. I ran back home and contacted Richard Hoy and Greg Owens of the Shawnee fire department."

Volunteer firemen from New Lexington, Shawnee, Corning and special mine rescue members of Peabody Coal Company, along with Perry County sheriff deputies and emergency squad personnel from the area were at the scene shortly after the mishap.

Dean assured rescue members that the ceiling was high enough to provide enough air and that there was no danger of accumulated gas in the mine shaft.

Crawling by the four-man crew into the shaft was "dangerous" because of the condition of the ceiling which had loosened and threatened to fall, it was reported.

Gotke, a senior at Miller High School, sustained a minor cut on the left forearm and Foley, a freshman at Miller, received a bump on the head.

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