

# AMAX miner rescued preceding walkout

By DAVELUTZ

A mechanical failure which caused an AMAX Coal mine employe to be trapped for five hours 400 feet below the surface of an 800-foot elevator shaft at the Wabash mine at Keensburg, Ill. may have sparked a series of events which includes vandalism of AMAX employes' vehicles and caused two consecutive shifts of workers to leave their jobs.

At 12:50 p.m. on Wednesday John Davis, an electrical supervisor, was descending into the elevator shaft aboard a lowering hoist car when a five and one-half-inch reflective drive shaft broke. The safety operational devices were engaged and the hoist stopped. Davis, the only passenger, was

able to contact safety personnel who, with the assistance of the Frontier Kemper Construction Co., managed to remove Davis, unharmed, from the stopped hoist at 5:55 p.m. Davis was brought to the surface by means of a lowered bucket device.

Before Davis was rescued, employes reporting for the second shift at 4 p.m. refused to enter the mine until Davis was removed from the hoist car. Employes on the second shift, after discussion with mine management union officials and district union officials agreed to enter the mine and continue working. The men began reporting for work at approximately 5 p.m.

At approximately 11:15 p.m. on Wednesday a wage employe

reported that the tires on his car had been flattened while on the second shift. Upon investigation it was determined that 30 tires on 14 vehicles were damaged in a similar manner.

The Wabash county sheriff's department was informed of the vandalism and proceeded to the mine to make an investigation. Employes on the third shift scheduled to begin work at midnight were witness to the investigation upon their arrival at the mine. Fifteen minutes later, employes on the third shift began leaving the mine site. Prior to their leaving they reported to management that their reason for leaving was "fear of damage to their personal property" while they were at work.

Employes on the day shift on Thursday also after reporting to work did not enter the mine for the same reasons.

AMAX officials have contacted officials of the UMWA international and UMWA district no. 12 in Illinois that they exercise the authority of their office in returning the striking miners to work immediately.

A UMWA district no. 12 meeting is scheduled at 2 p.m. on Thursday, and AMAX spokesman Pete McBride in Indianapolis reported that 15-20 strikers were picketing in front of the Indianapolis office of AMAX.

H. Elkins Payne Jr. vice-president of AMAX, employe relations, issued a statement calling the picket line "a small part of the massive Madison Avenue campaign launched by the UMWA to force AMAX coal company to accept a contract bargained by another Belle Ayr mine in Gillette, Wyoming."

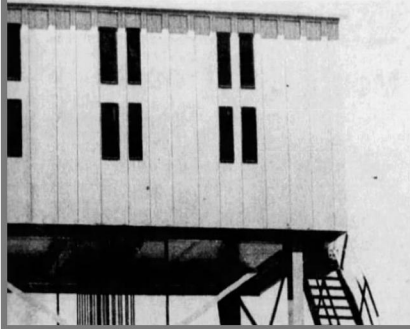
AMAX officials in Indianapolis declined to speculate whether the hoist breakdown and the tire slashing incidents were in any way related.

The AMAX Wabash Mine is located about one and one-half miles east of Keensburg, Ill. about seven miles south of Mount Carmel. The expanding operation will employ an estimated 700 jobs when full production is reached.

Construction on the mine began in 1970 at an estimated cost of \$45 million. Located 800 feet below the surface the Wabash mine is one of the deeper mines in the area.

Coal is shipped by railway from the Wabash mine across the Wabash River to Public Service Indiana's Gibson Generating Station in the river bottoms 10 miles west of Princeton. PSI is the sole customer of the mine which ships 3.6 million tons of coal per year. The first shipment was made in December 1973.

A number of Gibson county residents are employed by the Wabash mine.



## 1975 Amax miner trapped in elevator for five hours

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