

Cave-in Kills 3 Pa. Miners, Traps Another

HEGINS, Pa. (AP) — Three men were killed Wednesday when a Schuylkill County coal mine caved-in, trapping them 300 to 400 feet underground, a Department of Environmental Resources spokeswoman said.

A fourth man escaped immediately after the 2:30 p.m. cave-in at the anthracite coal mine and a fifth was freed by rescuers, officials said.

The miners were doing blasting work 3,300 feet from the entrance of the mine shaft, which angles into the ground, when one of their blasts triggered a cave-in that cut off their air supply, said spokeswoman Susan Woods.

She said she got her information from Walter Vicinelly, state commissioner of deep mine safety, who was at the scene.

Officials believe the three miners died from asphyxiation, Ms. Woods said. She said air in the mine shaft had an oxygen content of only 4 percent to 5 percent after the cave-in.

Ms. Woods said she expected rescuers to bring out the bodies of the three men by midnight.

Ms. Woods confirmed television reports that the dead miners were Gene Wolfgang; his son, Rick; and Frank Benner. She identified the rescued man as Troy Wolfgang, another son of Gene Wolfgang.

Troy Wolfgang was pulled out of the mine at 5:17 p.m., Ms. Woods said. He was listed in serious condition with two broken legs at Pottsville Hospital, said hospital spokesman Tom Zuber.

The cave-in was reported at the MS&W Coal Co. mine in the village of Hegins, in rural northwest Schuylkill County.

Ms. Woods did not know how the first miner escaped from the scene. "All I know is that he was out early on," she said. She said Troy Wolfgang "was rescued by another miner."

1985 Troy Wolfgang rescued from cavein 1



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