

# Four die in mine blast

ST. CHARLES, Va. (AP) — Rescue teams reached four miners trapped in an explosion at the P & P Coal Co. mine in this southwest Virginia community Thursday night and reported all were dead.

A spokesman for the Federal Mine Enforcement and Safety Administration said the rescue teams were bringing the bodies to the

surface and were clearing the mine of deadly methane gas.

Hope that the trapped miners would be found alive dimmed around 9 p.m. Thursday night as rescue teams trying to reach them encountered pockets of gas inside the pit.

"We're running into a lot of methane and that's slowing us down," said Paul

M. Bobroskwy, a safety training officer for the Federal Mining Enforcement & Safety Administration.

The men were trapped a little more than a mile inside the P & P Coal Co. mine this morning when an explosion was apparently triggered by excessive methane near where they were working.

Fourteen other miners working about 1,500 yards away were able to flee to safety.

While officials were saying publicly that the four men may be found alive, pessimism among inspectors and miners grew with the discovery of the methane gas.

Bobroskey said the rescuers were being particularly careful to avoid a second blast such as the one that occurred at Scotia Coal Co.'s mine in eastern Kentucky in March, 1976. Fifteen miners were killed in the initial blast at Scotia, and 11 others died two days later in a second explosion while trying to reach them.

"People get impatient. That's what happened at Scotia," Bobroskey said.

"We're trying to avoid that this time." He added that

See BLAST, Page 2

## Continues to swelter temperatures climb

traffic lights went out, and there was flash flooding on some roads and streets.

Virginia Electric & Power Co. said its customers had set a record for demand between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. Wednesday — 7,388,000 kilowatts, or 255,000 more than the previous peak in August 1975.

Appalachian Power Co. in Roanoke said its customers reached a peak demand of more than 3 million kilowatts Wednesday. But it wasn't a record. The 3.4 million kilowatt record was attained last Aug. 25.

About 2,000 Apco customers in the Roanoke

proceeded normally.

State police said many automobiles stalled out on interstate highways in various parts of Virginia when their engines, taxed by air conditioners, overheated under the blazing sun.

Department store managers in Roanoke reported sharp increases in demands for air conditioners and fans as the heat continued unabated for a second straight day.

"When they can't stand it any more, they come down," said one store manager.

# BLAST

(Continued from Page 1)

none of the rescue teams have picked up any sounds or other indications from the area where the miners are trapped that would indicate they are still alive.

"I would say that if the explosion didn't get them the carbon monoxide did," said Chad Blevins, 42, who was working inside the mine when the blast occurred.

The trapped miners were identified as Harold Johnson, 33, and Harold Wells, 40, both of St. Charles, Bill Perkins, 31, of Jonesville, and Danny Tester, 29, of Woodway.