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Southern District of West Virginia**

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**MINE OPERATOR PLEADS GUILTY TO MAKING FALSE STATEMENTS TO FEDERAL MINE  
SAFETY INVESTIGATORS**

BECKLEY, W.Va. –Raymond C. Dawson, 57, of Raysal, McDowell County, West Virginia, pleaded guilty yesterday before United States District Judge Irene C. Berger to a felony in connection with a federal investigation at the Brooks Run Mining Company, LLC – Cucumber Mine located in McDowell County. Dawson pleaded guilty to a single count information, charging him with making a false statement to special investigators with the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), in violation of 18 U.S.C. 1001.

U.S. Attorney Booth Goodwin stated, “This prosecution continues this administration’s commitment to keep mines safe by holding accountable individuals who shirk their duties under the Mine Act.”

Dawson had been certified by MSHA to provide certain required training to miners. Griffith Construction Company (“Griffith Construction”), an independent contractor that performed construction and other services at Brooks Run’s Cucumber Mine, used Dawson to provide training to its miners.

The defendant admitted that on or about November 3, 2008, at or near Iaeger, McDowell County, he knowingly and willfully made a materially false statement to special investigators with MSHA. At the time, Dawson further admitted that he falsely stated and represented to special investigators that “I always give the required training and always keep the miners the required amount of time,” when in fact, he had not given the required training to miners employed by Griffith Construction and had not kept the miners the required amount of time for training.

The Mine Act requires that new miners at a coal mine receive a certain number of hours of initial training. Regulations further require that initial training include instruction on: the miners’ work environment, including a visit to and a tour of the mine; hazard recognition; and health and safety aspects of the tasks to which they would be assigned.

The mine safety regulations required that experienced miners receive eight hours of annual refresher training. Regulations also specify training on mandatory health and safety standards related to the miners’ tasks, transportation controls and communication systems, firefighting, first aid, prevention of accidents, and the recognition and avoidance of electrical hazards.

This investigation was conducted by the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration. Dawson faces a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine when he is sentenced on August 25, 2011.

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