

# Mining Magazine



## Software

A round-up of the latest releases and upcoming features for the world's leading mine design and planning packages

## Sizing & classification

An in-depth look at hydrocyclones, including their design, application and upcoming installations

## Communications & networks

Cybercrime is a growing threat to mining companies. Ensure your security is up to scratch with advice from industry leaders

## Surface support equipment

A look at new products and features for small wheel loaders, excavators, graders and dozers ahead of CONEXPO 2014





# New Year's resolutions

**O**n January 6, the US Department of Labor's Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) released a report detailing some rather worrying mine-accident statistics for 2013. While 2012 saw the lowest number of work-related deaths in US mining industry records, with just 36 incidents, 2013 saw a 17% rise to 42. Of those fatalities, 20 were related to coal mining and 22 to metal/non-metal mining, compared with 20 and 16, respectively, in 2012.

The most common cause of accidents across the board was machinery and powered haulage equipment, and in his end of year summary, Joseph Main, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health, admitted that at least four coal-mining fatalities could have been prevented with the use of proximity-detection systems.

As of December 2013, 380 proximity detection systems had been installed on mobile equipment; 287 on continuous mining machines and 100 on other mobile machines.

MSHA states that there were 14,093 operating mines in the US in 2012. 2013 numbers aren't available yet, but judging by this, the proportion of mines that have installed this equipment on their machines must be tiny. This prompts the question as to why the use of proximity-detection equipment has not yet been made mandatory, particularly in underground coal mines.

In metal/non-metal mines, five fatalities occurred as a result of failing to lock out equipment power sources. Again, these accidents could have been prevented, by the simple act of disconnecting the power and attaching a personal safety lock and tag to prevent reconnection.

It appears that, for an industry that prides itself on high health and safety standards, things slipped somewhat, particularly during the fourth quarter of 2013, which saw 15 of the 42 deaths recorded in the year. The fact that four of these took place during the US government shutdown, which lasted from October 1 to 17, during which MSHA furloughed 60% of its staff and suspended its regular mine inspections, suggests that the US mining industry is highly dependent on government regulation when it comes to health and safety. However, mining companies should be policing their own operations as a matter of course.

By contrast, the Western Australian mining industry, which employs around 110,000 people, recorded just three deaths in 2013, and the Queensland government reported two deaths in the 2012-13 financial year for a workforce of 75,000, all at metalliferous mines. Queensland's surface coal-mining industry has been fatality-free for two years now, and the underground industry for six years. One contributing factor to this could be the fact that the Aussie market tends to have a faster uptake of new technologies than many other mining regions worldwide.

Although the individual Aussie workforces are significantly less than the total US one, extrapolate those numbers for a workforce of nearly 400,000 and the US still lags behind in safety stats.

While the US may need to pull up its socks this year, it is worth putting these figures into perspective. The Chinese mining industry, which has considerably lower safety standards than established mining regions such as the US and Australia, reported a drop in mining-related deaths in 2013 – the central government recorded 1,049 people dead or missing, a decrease it said of 24% from 2012.

The US mining industry is usually a role model for health and safety standards, one to which developing markets often aspire. So it is important that US mining companies take a leaf from the Australians' book and make 2014 a year to get back on top.

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**"It is important that US mining companies take a leaf from the Australians' book and make 2014 a year to get back on top"**



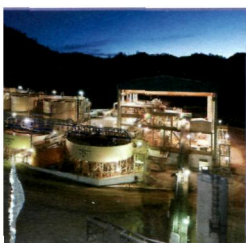
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- Water treatment & remediation
- Mapping & surveying
- Accommodation & workforce wellbeing
- Mining insurance

**COVER**

Dundee Precious Metals Inc is at the forefront of innovation in the mining industry. The company turned to advanced technology providers, including Dassault Systèmes GEOVIA, to help it increase productivity and production at its Chelopech mine in Bulgaria. Its 'Taking the Lid Off' initiative at this underground gold mine doubled production while reducing costs. The cover shows Chelopech mine Central Monitoring and Control Room and GEOVIA InSite's Central Monitoring and Shift Management modules.  
 Learn more: [www.geovia.com/dpm](http://www.geovia.com/dpm).



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