



Report of the
Blue Ribbon
Commission II

Rocky Mountain Coal Mining Institute
2007-2008 Strategic Plan



June 2007

Overview

The Blue Ribbon Commission II (BRCII) conducted a comprehensive self examination of the Rocky Mountain Coal Mining Institute (RMCMI). Based on this examination, the BRCII developed a series of recommendations, and combined those into a formal Strategic Plan for submittal to the Board of Directors. Major recommendations, and highlights of the Strategic Plan include:

- A comprehensive statement of RMCMI's core values, vision, and mission is presented.
- BRCII recommends a focused effort to recruit and retain members, along with enhanced member benefits and measures to foster leadership development within the association.
- Major changes to RMCMI's organizational structure are proposed, including streamlining the committee functions, increasing the number of Board Members to include Regional Directors rather than State Vice Presidents, and revisions to bylaws to clarify leadership roles.
- To remain an effective and relevant association, RMCMI should leverage its traditional educational efforts, to enhance those efforts by using web based delivery methods (webinars, on-line workshops, etc.), developing a year-round educational program, and expanding educational efforts to a wider audience.
- RMCMI must become more effective at promoting itself and should increase its focus on public relations and education.

The BRCII also concluded that most of RMCMI's activities are effective as they are currently conducted. In particular, the Patrons Scholarship program, Mine Rescue, and the annual convention are considered well managed, popular, and are major positives for RMCMI.

Overall, BRCII felt that RMCMI is currently serving its members well and adequately meeting its goal of "Promoting Western Coal Through Education". However, if RMCMI is to remain a vibrant, relevant association, it must change with the times. BRCII concluded that RMCMI can successfully make those changes while maintaining its core values and mission. The Strategic Plan sets out a path to accomplish that goal.

The Blue Ribbon Commission II

The first Blue Ribbon Commission was formed in 1989 by President Al Czarnowsky. The charge to that Commission was to complete a self examination of all aspects of the organization, judge whether the Institute was satisfying the overall desires of the membership, and to make recommendations to the Board of Directors. The 1989 Commission provided a detailed report which was published in the RMCMI proceedings.

The charge to the current commission was remarkably similar; that is to examine all aspects of RMCMI, and develop recommendations for the future of the Institute. Given this similarity of mission, it was decided to call the group the Blue Ribbon Commission II.

The participants in BRCII represent a broad cross section of the RMCMI family. A survey of the RMCMI membership was conducted in January which provided guidance for the subsequent work. A draft of the Strategic Plan was circulated among the Board of Directors and the Advisory Board, and comments solicited, prior to finalization.



The Blue Ribbon Commission II

The BRCII met for one organizational meeting in November 2006, and for 5 full day sessions between January and May 2007. The group was composed of 15 individuals who unselfishly devoted their time and effort to the work of the Commission. Immediate Past President Bob Bartosh chaired the BRCII, and Mr. Corky Kyle of the Kyle Group acted as both facilitator and consultant. Mr. Kyle has extensive experience with non-profit associations, including their governance, membership, and financial matters, and has participated in numerous similar strategic planning efforts for associations. Valuable perspective and continuity was provided by Charlie Margoff, former President and Life Member of RMCMI, and, most importantly, a member of the original Blue Ribbon Commission. The balance of the commission was drawn from RMCMI leadership, and from the various constituent groups within the Institute.

The full membership of BRCII included:

Bob Bartosh (Chair)	Dakota Coal Company
Rich Bate	John T Boyd Company
Rex Christensen	P&H Minepro Services
Mark Collett	Benetech, Inc.
Denise Dragoo	Snell & Wilmer
David Evans	Texas Westmoreland Coal Co.
Russell Hardy	Consol Energy
Karen Inzano	RMCMCI
Guy Johnson	Tech Applications & Marketing
Corky Kyle	The Kyle Group
Brad Lewis	ADDCAR Systems LLC
Charlie Margoff	RMCMCI Life Member
Ken Miller	Arch Coal/Thunder Basin
Dave Smaldone	PacifiCorp
Gary Stubblefield	Norwest Corporation

RMCMCI thanks all of these participants for their efforts, and in particular would acknowledge and thank the companies listed above. By supporting their employees in this work these employers will allow RMCMCI to remain a relevant and valuable contributor to the success of the industry, and to become an even greater resource to the supporting companies.

Membership Survey

BRCII began work by conducting a survey to learn how RMCMCI members perceived the organization, its benefits, and the value of membership. We also asked for ideas and opinions regarding the future direction of RMCMCI. The response to the survey was very good, with a response rate of over 13%. The major results of the survey included:

- Most RMCMCI members belong to a number of professional and industry organizations. Asked to rate the benefits of RMCMCI as related to these other organizations, RMCMCI was rated well above average at 3.7 on a scale of 1-5.
- The most commonly mentioned reason for joining RMCMCI was the opportunity to network with others industry or simply to stay in touch with old friends.
- When asked "What does RMCMCI do well?" the overwhelming response was the annual convention, and the Patrons Scholarship program.
- When asked "What does RMCMCI not do well?" the many responses went to the areas of political activism, and membership recruiting. Relatively few respondents mentioned the cost of the convention or the cost of annual dues.
- When asked what could be improved, many responses again went to political activism and public education/public relations.

- The survey asked for ideas as to philosophy, direction or approach that could be adopted to attract and retain new members and to remain a progressive association in the industry. Many good suggestions were received, including:
 - Expanding beyond the current 8 state region.
 - Taking a more active role in promoting the industry through public education and political activism.
 - Utilizing modern means of communications and providing a forum for the exchange of ideas for the western coal industry.
 - Create a higher public profile through media exposure and public relations efforts.
 - More outreach to companies and top executives.
- When asked what could be done to attract new members, the answers were largely in the area of offering discounted memberships to students and/or new younger members.

Many of these same thoughts were echoed by the members of BRCII, and were major considerations in developing the plans and recommendations herein.

Who Are We And What Do We Want to Become?

Based on the results of the survey, and the BRCII's own knowledge of RMCMI, and the Western coal industry, we developed an assessment of the current status of RMCMI using a "SWOT" analysis approach. ("SWOT" stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats). Based on this, the Commission concluded:

- RMCMI has significant strengths. The organization has a long and distinguished history. Educational efforts, and particularly the scholarship program, are effective and on par with any similar efforts in the industry. The annual convention is popular and successful, and is unique in its orientation towards family participation. The leadership, administration, and finances of the Institute are sound.
- Weaknesses are found in several areas. Some felt the Institute's identity (Who are we?) was not well defined or understood. Member recruitment (and particularly younger members) is a weakness, and program/service offerings to generate non-dues revenue are somewhat limited. Finally, the understanding of the Institute's purposes, and the value it brings, by the companies and upper management who support RMCMI's members is not as good as it could be.
- Opportunities exist to build on RMCMI's reputation as an educational resource by improving both the content and delivery of educational services. The BRCII concluded that RMCMI has an opportunity to be a unique, progressive organization, and a leader in the field of providing educational services to the mining industry.
- Threats to RMCMI revolve primarily around the welfare of the western coal industry, and are largely political/regulatory. Potential reductions in corporate support, due to consolidation, difficult economic times, or downturns in the industry also pose a threat. The major internal threat is declining membership, and the demographics of the industry.

One important outcome of the SWOT analysis was to better define RMCMI's position relative to "competing" organizations. BRCII asked the question "What does RMCMI offer prospective members that they cannot obtain elsewhere?" We identified only two "unique" aspects; the mountain resort venue for convention, and the organization's family orientation. Virtually every other service or benefit offered by RMCMI could be obtained in a reasonably similar form from other organizations. BRCII concluded that if RMCMI is to remain a vibrant and relevant association, it must work to differentiate itself, its benefits and its services from other mining organizations.

BRCII also addressed some fundamental questions as to the future of the Institute – what do we want to be? Do we want to grow and expand? Or should we recognize that our industry, and therefore membership base, is shrinking and perhaps try to concentrate our efforts on fewer activities that reflect our core strengths? Might it be that, as one respondent to the membership survey said - "All organizations outlive their usefulness. Has that time come for RMCMI?"

BRCII recognizes that RMCMI carries on a wide variety of activities ranging from mine rescue to college scholarships to sponsoring public education programs – not to mention convention. All of these require considerable time and effort from volunteers and from our full time staff of one. Yet the organization is fairly small, with about 500 members. And most of these activities are carried on by a small cadre of very active members, numbering about 30 people (or less than 10% of the membership). Who will succeed to the various committee chairs and board positions when the current people leave? Clearly, new people must be found to take an active role in the work and leadership of the Institute if we are to continue our current activities, not to mention growth and expansion. If we cannot add to our group of active volunteers, then reducing the scope of the Institute's activities may be the only alternative.

After considering these questions, it is the consensus of the BRCII that RMCMI should strive to grow and expand. We have a solid membership base, and BRCII strongly believes that, if we provide opportunities to participate, and a clear path through the organization's leadership structure, that many members will be willing to "sign on". We also have some real opportunities. RMCMI is a sound organization with many valuable strengths. Those strengths can be leveraged to make RMCMI the pre-eminent organization for the western coal industry. The plans and recommendations which follow are designed to make this a reality.

The Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan is the basic framework which ties together the recommendations, goals, and objectives arrived at by BRCII. It includes a number of components, ranging from a statement of the values, vision and mission of RMCMI, to detailed goals, strategies, priorities and budgets for implementation of those goals. The Strategic Plan itself is found in the Appendix to this report. The development of the plan and the various issues and considerations that are the foundation of the plan are discussed below.

Core Values

The core values govern the operation of RMCMI and its conduct or relationships with society at large, members, suppliers, employees, local communities and other stakeholders. BRCII reviewed the nature and history of the Institute, the opinions of our members, and our view of who/what we want to be, arriving at these Core Values:

- *Safety - Integral to the Industry*
- *Education – the Resource for the Western Coal Mining Industry*
- *Mentoring – of New Industry Engineers and Technicians*
- *Unity – of the Western Coal Mining Industry*
- *Family – Focus and Support for our Families and Communities*

Vision Statement

A vision statement presents a picture of the future of the Institute in terms of its size, place, activities, and physical appearance. It is intended to be a “vivid description of the Institute as it effectively carries out its operations”. The BRCII suggests the following Vision Statement:

“To be the preeminent association for advancing the future of western coal; focused on safety, education, mentoring, networking and family.”

Mission Statement

The Mission Statement reflects the nature of the organization, and presents a clear statement of the purposes of Institute. BRCII debated at length, and arrived at the following Mission Statement which we believe characterizes the appropriate mission for RMCMI:

“As a professional association comprised of individuals, and supported by companies, our mission is to:

- *Promote exceptional safety processes, behavior, performance, and results through training, benchmarking and evaluation*
- *Advance the future of western coal through education, environmental stewardship, professional development, and public relations*
- *Provide practical training and academic programs to the members, public, and other stakeholders*
- *Provide opportunities for professional networking and business development*
- *Recognize the importance and value the family plays in supporting the members of the western coal mining industry.”*

The first Blue Ribbon Commission also considered the Institute’s purpose or mission, and while they did not arrive at a particular mission statement, they did recommend that the statement be brief, to the point, and that it be incorporated on letterhead, mailings, brochures, etc. Thus, evolved “Promote Western Coal Through Education”. BRCII felt that the effective mission of the Institute had broadened considerably since the first BRC met and that a simple statement like “Promote Western Coal Through Education” did not adequately reflect that expanded mission. As a letterhead slogan however, “Promote Western Coal Through Education” is an accurate relevant statement of RMCMI’s purpose.

Some Things Should be Left Alone

The Strategic Plan is a plan for change. Yet we recognize that not all things need changed, and change simply for the sake of change can be counterproductive. In the view of BRCII, (a view echoed by the membership) most of the Institute’s activities are well conceived, appropriately planned and executed. Thus, for these activities BRCII’s recommendation is to leave them alone - let them proceed as they have in the past. Our reasoning in some of the more important of these areas is discussed below.

The Annual Convention

The annual convention is RMCMI's "big event". The convention was cited repeatedly in our membership survey as a major plus for the organization, a beneficial networking opportunity, and as being well organized and run. BRCII did consider a number of aspects of the convention, specifically:

- Convention Date. The convention has, since the inception of the organization been scheduled for the last Sunday in June (coinciding with the traditional "miners vacation"). Yet this is problematical for some due to other industry events, family commitments, and other reasons. BRCII considered other possible dates for the convention, and advantages and disadvantages of rescheduling. We concluded that almost any date during the summer would have similar scheduling conflicts, and therefore there was little advantage in changing. Thus, we do not recommend a change in the convention date at this time.
- Location/Venue. The location of the convention at a mountain resort can be problematical due to cost, potentially limited off-site attractions, and the elevation. Thus, a different site may be preferable. However, the membership survey generally identified the mountain resort venue as a strength. Also, the Board and Convention Committee regularly considers alternative sites at lower elevations, and in less central locations (Arizona, Montana). BRCII feels that site selection is a matter for the Convention Committee and Board, who should continue to consider, as they do now, alternative sites.
- Schedule. The convention schedule is full with little "down time". BRCII considered whether the schedule could be reduced by eliminating events or by extending the convention itself. While we believe that a less heavily scheduled convention may be desirable, there are few viable areas to cut. More importantly, this is really a matter of convention planning which should be decided on a year-by-year basis by the Convention Committee.

One potential schedule change that may be desirable relates to committee meetings. BRCII, elsewhere in this report, recommends that many of the committees be expanded to 4 – 5 members. Yet it is probably not possible to have a physical meeting of those expanded committees at any time except at convention. We suggest that the Board consider setting aside an hour or two following the annual membership meeting on Tuesday for the committees to meet and formulate an agenda for the following year.

- Notifications, Registration Packages. Convention registration packages are sent in the late spring for the meeting the following April. In some cases the logistics involved, and delays in obtaining program information, pricing parameters, etc., delay this even further. This reduces attendance at the convention and ultimately membership, in that some are notified too late to make room in their schedule to attend. Clearly, every effort should be made to have the convention program, schedule and pricing defined as early as possible so that people can plan for the event. We also suggest that possibilities such as mailing preliminary programs, sending email notifications, and other means be used to the extent possible to make people aware of, and build enthusiasm for, the convention earlier in the year.
- Trade Show. Historically, the RMCMI convention has included only very modest, if any, vendor displays. A more extensive trade show component where vendors and service providers could have booths and/or more extensive displays could be a source of non-dues revenue, and may be welcomed by the vendors who support RMCMI. The BRCII

considered this possibility, and concluded that there is minimal interest in an enhanced trade show content at this time, but it should be a consideration for the Convention Committee in the future.

- **Pricing.** A few responses to the membership survey indicated that the expense of convention was prohibitive, particularly for families or for those who are not supported by an employer. BRCII considered this issue and concluded that the RMCMI convention is not overpriced. Several factors bear on this conclusion:
 - The cost of the RMCMI convention, when meals are considered, is at the low end of the range for similar meetings of other associations.
 - The spouse and children's packages are essentially priced at cost.
 - Virtually all non-profit associations have a similar financial dynamic - the annual meeting and convention must generate enough revenue to support the association throughout the year. The RMCMI convention must be priced at a level that generates some income for the Institute.

We must, however, recognize that, particularly for bringing a family to convention, the cost conflicts with the family orientation that is a key aspect of RMCMI's core values and mission. We suggest that, in the course of future convention planning, the convention committee consider adjusting the pricing structure to reduce the cost to families and others without company support.

Overall, BRCII concluded that the annual convention is one of the strengths of the association, and that the current organization and process is good. We also believe that any changes that may be warranted are appropriately matters for the various convention committees to consider and decide in light of circumstances at the time.

Patrons/Scholarship Program. The Patrons Scholarship program has been a major success for the Institute both in terms of fundraising, and in terms of benefits to scholars. The committee members involved with the program, along with the Board of Directors, have managed the program well and will undoubtedly continue to do so. BRCII does not recommend any changes.

Mine Rescue. By all accounts the Mine Rescue program is well received, effective, and well run. Furthermore, the Mine Rescue evaluation at the convention is self funding, and tends to add to the "family-friendly" atmosphere. Finally, the program has evolved and improved under the current leadership, becoming better each year. BRCII believes that the Mine Rescue program is a strong asset of RMCMI and does not recommend any major changes.

Administration. The membership survey indicated that the administration of the Institute, under the direction of Karen Inzano, is a strength of the organization. BRCII agrees, and would not recommend any changes. We would note however, that the administrative workload is increasing steadily, and implementing the recommendations of this BRCII review

will increase that load even more. The Board of Directors must be cognizant of the likely need for additional help at the office. That may come in the form of another full time staffer, increasing the amount of part-time help, contracting with various service providers for assistance, or increased and improved automation.

The Strategic Plan - Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

The Strategic Plan includes goals, objectives and strategies which provide a roadmap to achieving the vision and mission of the Institute. The goals define the ultimate destination, while strategies set the route, and objectives provide milestones along the way. Goals, Objectives and Strategies must be quantifiable, consistent, realistic and achievable. The issues addressed by BRCII and the suggested goals, objectives and strategies are reflected in the Strategic Plan, and discussed below.

RMCMC Governance and Leadership

A relatively small group of individuals provide leadership and accomplish much of the work of the Institute. While there is some “turnover” from year to year, that turnover is modest. To successfully accomplish our mission, it is critical to encourage and develop new leadership for the organization. For this to happen, there must be a means of identifying new leaders, and a path of increasing involvement and responsibility through the organizational structure that allows these new leaders to advance. We also concluded that:

- Developing leaders is not only critical to the Institute, but provides an important career benefit to the individual member, and to that member’s employer.
- Effective governance of the association is essential to its welfare. BRCII identified a number of organizational/bylaws changes that are desirable for the Institute to be properly governed, to comply with legal requirements, and to effectively interact with its membership and the public.
- There is a significant body of members who we believe are capable and willing to take on a larger role in the Institute if only they were asked or encouraged to do so. Our recommendations include strategies to bring more of these individuals into active roles in the Institute.

Specific suggested goals in the area of leadership and governance are listed below:

GOAL 1 Update and enhance RMCMI’s leadership structure to encourage members to consider and be an active part of the association leadership.

The Institute should endeavor to provide more opportunities for leadership development, and strive to provide additional career benefits to those members who choose to serve in leadership positions. One opportunity is in the makeup and activities of the Board of Directors (Board). Specifically:

Review and Adjust Board Representation

The current organizational structure of the Institute in many ways revolves around representation from the eight member states. BRCII concluded that this orientation towards an “eight state organization” may not be optimal going forward. A significant proportion of our membership is from outside the region, and with the increasing globalization and consolidation of the industry, fewer and fewer of our members associate themselves with a particular state. We would also note that the “state meetings” held by the Institute have evolved more into regional meetings, drawing participants from multiple states. Given this, BRCII suggests that with due consideration to orderly transition, the current eight state organization, along with the state Vice President positions, could be changed to three regional groups (“North” including North Dakota, Montana and Wyoming, “Central” with Utah and Colorado, and “South with New Mexico, Arizona and Texas), each represented by a “Regional Director”. Those three Regional Directors, plus one “at-large” director could be added to the Institute’s Board (bringing the Board to 14 members).

Board members are, in many respects, an underutilized resource within the Institute. BRCII recommends that the job description for Board members be changed to allow greater participation by the Board members in the work of the Institute. Specifically, we recommend the Board consider assigning a Board member as “Board Liaison” to each of the ad-hoc committees and rotating the assignments annually. This would add another strong member to each committee, and improve communications between the Board and the Committee. Also, it would allow the Board member to become more familiar with the work of each committee before that member rotates to the Presidency.

Improve Education/Orientation for Board Members

The responsibilities of the members of the Board of Directors have grown in recent years, particularly in the area of legal and fiduciary matters. However, new Board member orientation is minimal, and few new Board members are fully aware of the finances of the Institute, the scope of its activities, or the workings of the office. BRCII recommends that the Board consider improving the orientation process for new Board members. This may entail an

expanded orientation document, an orientation session held at convention, and/or educational materials from outside providers as to legal responsibilities for Board members of non-profits.

Review and Adjust the Process for Election of Directors and Officers

Currently the RMCMI membership elects one board member per year who “moves through the seats” during his/her seven year tenure on the Board. All board members except the Executive Director and Treasurer are elected in this fashion. All officers of RMCMI (President, President Elect, Executive Director, Secretary, Treasurer, and the Convention Liaison) are either elected or appointed by the Board. The majority of the Board also has the power to remove a director or officer.

Based on input from Corky Kyle, this process is reasonable. However, he indicated that that legal matters relating to Board and Officer elections for non-profits can be complex and advises that the issue be researched by an attorney, and/or via documents available from ASAE.

The process of electing officers is not entirely clear as the bylaws are currently written. Also the addition of four directors and eliminating the State Vice President positions will require revisions to the Bylaws. BRCII recommendations that if and when these changes to the bylaws are made, they reflect a process that incorporates the following principles:

- All Directors should, at some point, stand for election by the membership.
- The succession of the President Elect to the President position should be automatic, and not subject to election by the Board (the President Elect should continue be elected). This will provide surety to the President Elect that will allow him/her to have an early start on organizing for his/her term as President.

The current (and mis-named) “Ad-Hoc” committees do the real work of the Institute. There are a large number of these committees (currently 13, which is down from 15 in 2006), and they typically have only one member, who serves as Committee Chair. BRCII concluded that this Ad-Hoc Committee structure could be improved and taken advantage of to achieve other goals.

GOAL 2 Update and enhance association committee structure to encourage greater member participation and involvement

Review and enhance RMCMI’s committee structure

BRCII came to a number of conclusions and recommendations concerning RMCMI’s committee structure. Specifically:

- The Patrons Committee and the Scholarship Committee serve complementary functions. We recommend they be combined (the “Patrons Scholarship” committee) and co-chairs appointed.
- We recommend that the various convention committees (Program, Registration, Reception, Beverage) be consolidated into a single committee chaired by the Convention Liaison Officer. That person, working with the President could create whatever sub-committees may be appropriate.
- The size of the committees should be increased, ideally to 4-5 members on each committee.
- Written charters or mandates for each committee should be reviewed and updated.
- Means of communications among committee members (without a meeting) should be improved, possibly via the website.
- The Board should consider expanding the mandate of the current Continuing Education committee (and renaming it the “Professional Development Committee”) to involve a wider range of educational offerings, and enhanced methods of delivery of those offerings.

BRCII also came to the conclusion that RMCMI should endeavor to raise its profile as an organization within the industry and among the public in general. To that end, we recommend the Board consider creating a Public Relations committee, and perhaps retaining the services of a public relations professional.

Improve Recruitment of Committee Members

BRCII concluded that the committee structure provides a good vehicle to encourage member involvement and to develop future leaders for RMCMI. With expanded membership on the committees, a new committee member will have an opportunity become more involved in RMCMI without making the time commitment that chairing the committee would require. Our sense is that there are many members who would be willing to serve on a committee if asked or otherwise given the opportunity. BRCII recommends that the Board, and the Membership Committee explore means to recruit new committee members. These might include sign-up sheets at convention, response cards in convention packets, and communications through the newsletter and website.

Membership

The first Blue Ribbon Commission concluded that “attracting and maintaining membership must continually be one of the top priorities of the Institute”. This is as true today as it was in 1989. While RMCMI has been able to maintain a fairly stable membership, we have not made a strong effort to grow. Our membership committee has been a committee of one, and while

those persons have worked diligently, as have the State Vice Presidents and others, we have not been successful in growing our membership.

We face an additional challenge going forward due to the demographics in our industry and in the organization. Many of our most active members will retire over the next few years, and a new, younger generation of coal miners will take over. RMCMI must actively recruit these people. We must demonstrate that there are benefits to membership and that membership in RMCMI is a positive for their company, and for their own professional development.

<p>GOAL 3 Increase membership and establish a membership retention program for RMCMI</p>
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BRCII strongly believes that the first, critical, step towards enhancing membership is to expand the Membership Committee to at least 5 members. These must be active, committed volunteers willing to initiate and follow through on various membership building initiatives. The committee must also be provided with adequate funding to carry out the objectives. Other recommended objectives include:

Increase New Memberships

Once formed, the membership committee should be given the task of developing a campaign to increase membership and to meet a specific objective (we suggest a 20% increase). This campaign might include:

- Develop a database of prospective members.
- Develop a membership kit that presents the features and benefits of membership and would be suitable to give to a prospective member.
- Initiate a Membership Ambassador program.
- Undertake a one-on-one recruiting program.
- Advertise for new members.
- Develop relationships with Universities and trade schools to identify prospective members early in their career.

BRCII also recommends regular review and if justified updating of membership categories to assure that our membership structure meets the needs of new and current members.

BRCII considered the merits of creating a corporate membership category. BRCII's conclusion is that a corporate membership category or program is not justified at this time. The structure of such a program tends to be complex and difficult to administer, and we don't

see that Institute's finances or membership base would be greatly improved as a result. At the end of the day, we feel that RMCMI has always been an organization of individuals; it is a strength of the organization, and doesn't warrant change.

That said, we must recognize that without the support and encouragement of our members employers, the Institute could not exist in its current form. It is essential that employers receive value by supporting their employee's involvement in RMCMI. BRCII recommends that the Membership Committee assess the potential for a corporate membership support program. Such a program would be designed to demonstrate to employers and executives the direct benefits to their company of having employees involved in RMCMI, to determine which benefits employers find most valuable, and to identify opportunities whereby RMCMI can work with employers to benefit both parties.

Develop a Membership Retention Program

Membership retention must go hand-in-hand with new member recruitment. Currently, most of RMCMI's membership losses are due to job changes, transfers, etc. However, some are undoubtedly because the member is not satisfied with, or is not aware of the benefits of membership. The Membership Committee should be tasked with developing a membership retention program which might include:

- A procedure to follow-up with members who do not renew to determine why they choose to leave. This could be in the form of a brief questionnaire, a phone call, an email, or personal contact. In the best case, the non-renewing member will choose to renew. But in any event the Membership Committee will gain valuable knowledge as to what issues need to be addressed to retain members.
- Increased efforts to make members aware of the benefits of membership in the organization, possibly via the newsletter or the website.

One initial step towards improving membership retention would be a survey of the membership regarding membership benefits. This is addressed under Goal 4.

Dues

BRCII discussed the subject of the Institute's membership dues. The majority felt the current dues level of \$100 per year was "below market". Most commission members did not view the amount of the annual dues as a major consideration for those considering joining RMCMI. We also received advice from Corky Kyle to the effect that among associations, the value of membership is often perceived as related to the amount of the dues. Thus, by maintaining dues at a relatively low level we are in essence undervaluing membership in the organization.

BRCII did not include an increase in dues in the Strategic Plan. However, we do recommend that the Board consider raising dues at some point. The consensus of the BRCII is that \$250 per year would be appropriate.

GOAL 4 Review and enhance member benefits and services
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Why would one want to become a member of RMCMI – what are the benefits? Are those benefits any different, or better than, those of competing organizations? The membership survey, and the BRCII's discussions provide some indications. The most obvious benefits, networking opportunities, superior venues, technical program, etc., revolve around the annual convention. In fact it is likely that many members are members only because they have to join to attend convention – dues are just an added cost. But what about the other 361 days each year? How does a member benefit on those days? The real work of the Institute goes on during those other 361 days. If there is no benefit to being a year-round member, how will we find people to do that work? BRCII recommends the following steps:

Identify member benefits and services and determine potential to enhance those services

RMCMI staff, assisted by the membership committee should undertake a comprehensive review of RMCMI's membership benefits and services, with the objective of enhancing those benefits and services to provide greater value to our members and their employers. This could include the following strategies:

- Inventory current benefits of membership and available services to members.
- Survey the membership on benefits and services to determine which are most valuable, and what additional services would be desirable.
- Research benefits and services offered by other, similar, associations to see if any of those would be viable for RMCMI.
- Evaluate the financial costs and benefits of current and enhanced services.

Communications and Public Relations

Timely, effective communications with members, companies, and the public in general are increasingly important. This issue involves not only the means of communication (newsletter, website, etc.) but the nature of the information communicated, and the entity being communicated with. BRCII reviewed RMCMI's current communications practices, and concluded that there is potential to improve and expand those efforts.

We also observe that the Institute has, over its long history, been a fairly “low key” association. We have not endeavored to promote Institute or its capabilities beyond the coal industry, and indeed, to some extent, not even within the industry. “Marketing” the Institute is arguably an essential element to the Institute’s future health and success.

We consider these needs (communications and public relations) sufficiently important to RMCMI’s future to recommend an additional ad-hoc committee be formed (the “Public Relations Committee”) to review update and enhance the Institute’s public relations and communications efforts. We also expect this effort to require substantial funding. It will be necessary to budget adequate money to allow the committee to carry out its mandate.

Note that the committee’s task would differ from that of the current Public Education committee. The mandate of the Public Education committee is to educate the public regarding the western coal industry. The Public Relations committee is, in effect, charged with marketing RMCMI.

GOAL 5 Review, update, and enhance the Institute’s communications programs for interacting with members, the public and other stakeholders

Review RMCMI’s overall communications program

Specific strategies include:

- Survey members to determine how they prefer to receive communications from the Institute. Potentially tailor communication modes to the individual members.
- Determine what information members consider valuable, and identify what types of information the Institute may be beneficially or uniquely suited to deliver.
- Consider retaining the services of a Public Relations specialist to enhance the Institute’s profile within the industry and among the general public.
- Evaluate the image of the Institute with the objective of improving the “marketing” of the Institute. This evaluation should address the regional character of the Institute, the name, the industry segments served, and the “branding” of the Institute both within the industry and among the public in general.

In addition, the Public Relations Committee should address new means of communications that are available such as webinars, blogs, etc. These means of communications, particularly coupled with the educational mission of the Institute, offer many possibilities for the future.

The commission spent considerable time discussing the nature of the information to be communicated, particularly when those communications are targeted beyond our

membership. A number of the topics discussed are, we believe, worthy of review by the Public Relations Committee, the Board, and the overall membership. These include:

- **Lobbying.** Several responses to the membership survey indicated a desire that RMCMI be more active in promoting the industry with our legislative leaders. However, if we are to maintain our status as a tax-exempt 501 (c) (3) organization we are limited in the scope of political activities we can undertake. For this reason, the Institute has historically not engaged in any activities that could be considered as “lobbying”. However, we now understand that those restrictions may not be as stringent as we thought, and that, particularly in the realm of providing educational information to legislators, there may be relatively few effective restrictions. We suggest that this topic be reviewed, and the potential for RMCMI to provide sound, factual, information to our political leaders be evaluated.
- **Awareness within the Industry.** Most of the participants (companies, employees, vendors etc.) in the western coal industry are aware of the existence of RMCMI, but in many cases the knowledge of the full range of the Institute’s activities is limited. We recommend that the Public Relations Committee assess the RMCMI’s communications efforts within the industry, with the objective of raising awareness of the Institute’s mission and activities.
- **Name Change.** One recurring comment goes to the Institute’s name, with comments typically falling into two categories. First, the Institute extends well beyond the Rocky Mountains into Texas, North Dakota, etc., and a large percentage of our members are from outside the Rocky Mountain region – thus, those members may not feel RMCMI is really “their” organization. Secondly, the name “Rocky Mountain Coal Mining Institute” is cumbersome and difficult to work into a brief message, and thus, a hindrance when communicating outside the organization.

BRCII believes that consideration of a change to the Institute’s name is a valid subject for consideration by the Public Relations Committee, and that efforts to better present the Institute to the public, as well as “branding” issues may well predicate towards a name change at some point. However, the consensus of the BRCII is that there is little perceived reason to change the name at this time, and the reasons that are present do not outweigh the benefits of the long heritage and tradition of the current name.

- **Public Relations.** BRCII’s review of the activities of similar trade oriented associations revealed that other organizations approach public relations, including marketing and branding of the organization, more aggressively than does RMCMI. Indeed in many cases such marketing is considered necessary for survival. RMCMI makes virtually no effort to “toot our horn” to the public, and while this does not appear to be an urgent priority, our perception is that such public relations efforts will become increasingly important. Therefore we recommend that communications with the public about the Institute, be part of the mandate for the Public Relations Committee.

The Institute’s website has the potential to be a powerful and critically important tool for communications, for the Institute’s educational work, and to simplify administration. Thus, use of the website could be split between any number of people and committees, all of whom may want differing functions, looks, etc. BRCII recommends that “ownership” of the website be assigned to the Public Relations Committee. Day-to-day operation and maintenance should

continue to rest with the office. However, decisions regarding content, presentation, additional capabilities and the possibility of retaining an outside consultant should be controlled the Public Relations Committee.

Educational

Education of industry personnel is a fundamental mission of the Institute. The BRCII concluded that the Institute's current educational endeavors are generally sound but are also relatively limited. We believe that RMCMI has an opportunity to build on its reputation for providing quality educational offerings by expanding those offerings, and utilizing modern communication techniques for delivery. Doing so will provide member benefits, benefits to employers of members, and potentially a significant income stream.

GOAL 6 **Provide quality education programs to improve and enhance engineer and technician, industry mine rescue, and management skills.**

To accomplish a major expansion of educational offerings the current Continuing Education committee will have to be expanded and strengthened. We also suggest renaming it to the "Professional Development Committee" to better reflect its expanded mission.

Currently RMCMI offers continuing education, via the short course, targeted at professional engineers. The mine rescue program also provides valuable educational services to mine rescue teams and their members. Both of these programs provide benefits to employers via improved knowledge and skills. BRCII recommends that the Professional Development Committee investigate the potential for expanding these offerings over time to include training in technician and trade skills, and management skills.

Within these areas, we suggest an effort to determine, via research, survey, and contacts with industry leaders those educational services that are most in demand and that RMCMI is best positioned to provide. RMCMI should also research offerings by "competitors" to assess the potential market for specific types of offerings. Based on this information, the financial and practical viability of expanded offerings can be assessed.

BRCII's discussions and research lead us to believe that educational efforts by organizations such as ours are likely to be very different in the future. While in-person, hands-on training will continue to be important in some areas, many topics can be delivered effectively via the internet (webinars, websites), tele-seminars, video, and other means. These types of educational offerings can be offered year-round, without instructors having to physically travel to the classroom site, and can be integrated into other training exercises a company may be

undertaking. This appears to be a fairly open field and thus an opportunity for RMCMI that should be investigated.

The Institute's educational orientation may provide the best opportunity to differentiate RMCMI from competing organizations and thus, enhance the benefits of membership. We also believe that enhanced educational offerings will be a cornerstone of achieving both long term membership and financial growth for the Institute. The Strategic Plan outlines a series of objectives and strategies to assess and take advantage of this opportunity.

Non-Dues Revenue

Non-dues revenue is critical to nearly all non-profit associations. For RMCMI, non-dues revenue includes convention income, sponsorships, donations, state meeting revenues, etc. (Financially the Patrons Fund is treated as a separate entity from the Institute itself, thus, donations to the Patrons Fund are not counted as revenue for the Institute). In recent years RMCMI has enjoyed a fairly high level of non-dues revenue; roughly 85% non-dues versus typical association levels of 70%. Thus, increasing non-dues revenue is not an urgent priority. However, over the long term, the Institute is not sustainable on dues alone – we must diligently work to grow non-dues revenue.

GOAL 7	Create new non dues revenue for the Institute
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To identify and implement new sources of non-dues revenue, BRCII suggests that fundraising activities be put under the auspices of the Finance Committee, and that a task force headed by the Executive Director be formed within that committee structure to evaluate potential revenue sources. The task force should research revenue sources enjoyed by other associations, and use the resources of CSAE to develop plans for implementing revenue raising programs. Our members, and more particularly their companies could be surveyed to identify needs that RMCMI might serve and generate revenue from. The fundraising task force should also work closely with the Professional Development Committee as delivery of educational offerings appears to be a favorable revenue source.

Mentoring

The BRCII discussed the need for mentoring new entrants into the industry at some length, and we believe there is a role for RMCMI to play in this area. An Institute sponsored mentoring program could be complimentary to similar efforts sponsored by companies, and

may have the additional attraction of remaining available to members even if they change employers. Finally, such a program could serve as a membership recruiting tool.

GOAL 8 Create a mentoring program to enhance the integration of new engineers and technicians into the industry

We recommend that the Professional Development Committee appoint a task force to investigate the potential for creation of a mentoring program under the auspices of RMCMI. Specific strategies are listed in the strategic plan.

Budget – Money and People

BRCII considered the cost of implementing the Strategic Plan to determine whether RMCMI could reasonably afford the expenses associated with that plan. Generally the recommendations rely more on volunteers than on money. Thus the cost of the plan is reasonably within the Institute’s budget, assuming that some financial benefit is realized by the implementing the various recommendations. The estimated implementation cost, and impact on the current budget is summarized:

	Current Budget	Impact of Strategic Plan	Revised Budget
Income			
Convention	180,600	-	180,600
Sponsorships	75,000	-	75,000
Membership (Dues)	44,000	8,500	52,500
Professional Development	12,000	25,000	37,000
Other/Miscellaneous	10,000	-	10,000
Total Income	321,600	33,500	355,100
Expenses			
Administrative/Board	147,000	-	147,000
Convention	120,800	-	120,800
Membership	-	7,000	7,000
Professional Development	14,000	6,000	20,000
Public Education	20,000	20,000	40,000
Public Relations	-	20,000	20,000
Total Expense	301,800	53,000	354,800
Net Income	19,800	(19,500)	300

The revised budget shown above assumes no change to the amount of annual dues, but does assume a 20% increase in membership. The expense associated with public relations is an estimate, and, if the plan is successfully implemented that expense will grow. That additional expense will hopefully be offset by increased non-dues revenue (which is not included above)

and a larger membership base. Finally, the budget does not include any increases in office administration cost. This may be optimistic, and some additional administrative expenditures may be necessary.

Because the plan relies primarily on volunteers, BRCII addressed the question of needs for volunteer time, and the availability of volunteers to fill those needs. Volunteers serve the Institute primarily as Officers, Board members, or on the various committees. A review of the current membership indicates that there are in the range of 50 to 60 current members who are, or have at one time or another, served in some volunteer capacity on behalf of the Institute. Currently there are approximately 30 of these who are active volunteers. In total there are somewhat over 500 members in RMCMI (some of whom are likely inactive and will remain so). Thus roughly 5% to 10% of the membership takes or has taken an active leadership role in the Institute.

Increasing the membership on the Board and on the Committees is a primary thrust of the Strategic Plan. If all of the recommendations were implemented, something on the order of 50 – 60 active Board and Committee members would be required, (not including the various Task Forces). Thus, a minimum of 20 to 30 additional people, plus replacements for those who are currently serving, would need to be recruited from the membership. If successful, a solid 10% of the membership would have to be willing to serve in leadership roles.

It is the consensus of BRCII that there are sufficient willing members to fill these positions. Recruiting those volunteers will be challenging, but we are confident it can be accomplished. (Specific strategies are outlined under Goal #2.). Thus, as with the financial aspects of the Strategic Plan, we believe the people aspects are achievable.

Implementation Timeline

BRCII prioritized the goals outlined in the Strategic Plan, and estimated the implementation time that would be required. These estimates are shown in the table below.

Priority	Goal	Implementation Time	Responsible Party	Budget
#1	G-1: Leadership	12 Months	Board/Executive Dir.	Board Expense
#2	G-2: Committee Structure	12 Months	Board of Directors	Board Expense
#3	G-3: Membership	12 Months	Membership Committee	Membership Budget
#4	G-4: Benefits & Services	12 Months	Executive Director/ Staff	Admin. Expense
#5	G-5: Communications	12 Months	PR/Admin Staff	PR/Admin
#6	G-6: Education	18 Months	Professional Devel. Committee	Professional Development
#7	G-7: Non-Dues Revenue	18 Months	Executive Director/ Staff	Admin. Expense
#8	G-8: Mentor Program	18 Months	Professional Devel. Committee	Professional Development

Note that the prioritization is more in terms of schedule than importance. For instance, BRCII considers Goal 3 (Membership) as the most important, but Goal 2 (expanding and strengthening the Membership Committee) must be accomplished first.

Some members of the BRCII felt that the timeframes were overly aggressive, and that it would not be practically possible to accomplish such wide-ranging changes to an organization that meets just once a year in a 12 – 18 month period. We were strongly advised that, in today's rapidly changing environment for trade associations, a timeframe of 10, 5, or even 3 years would be too long, and would hamstring the organization's ability to change with the times. In addition, there is currently enthusiasm and motivation within the organization to accomplish these goals. To extend the timeframe would risk allowing that momentum to dissipate. Thus this relatively aggressive timetable is recommended.

The Future

Rapid change is characteristic of our industry and times, and RMCMI must change as well. In this, BRCII echoes the first Blue Ribbon Commission, which concluded its report with the following:

“The Rocky Mountain Coal Mining Institute must grow and advance and frequently self examine itself to meet the ever changing needs of our industry and the individuals whom are

involved. The work initiated by the (1989) Blue Ribbon Commission must not end with this report. Its basic premise of initiating progress must be embraced by the Board of Directors and the future Presidents of the RMCMI as the first in many steps to fulfill the needs of the present membership, the Western coal industry, and those individuals who will inherit our legacy as we have done from a pioneer group of individuals who first assembled over 75 years ago.”

APPENDIX

2007 – 2008 STRATEGIC PLAN



Rocky Mountain Coal Mining Institute 2007-2008 Strategic Plan

Core Values:

- *Safety - Integral to the Industry*
- *Education - the Resource for the Western Coal Mining Industry*
- *Mentoring - of New Industry Engineers and Technicians*
- *Unity - of the Western Coal Mining Industry*
- *Family - Focus and Support for our Families and Communities*

Vision Statement:

"To be the preeminent association for advancing the future of western coal; focused on safety, education, mentoring, networking and family."

Mission Statement:

"As a professional association comprised of individuals, and supported by companies, our mission is to:

- *Promote exceptional safety processes, behavior, performance, and results through training, benchmarking and evaluation*
- *Advance the future of western coal through education, environmental stewardship, professional development, and public relations*
- *Provide practical training and academic programs to the members, public, and other stakeholders*
- *Provide opportunities for professional networking and business development*
- *Recognize the importance and value the family plays in supporting the members of the western coal mining industry."*

2007-2008 RMCMI Strategic Plan Goals, Objectives & Strategies

GOAL 1 **Update and enhance RMCMI's leadership structure to encourage members to consider and be an active part of the association leadership.**

Objective 1.1 Review and adjust board representation

Strategies:

- 1.1.1 Increase the size of the board from 9 to 14 members
- 1.1.2 Adjust regional areas and define Regional Director responsibilities
- 1.1.3 Review and revise job descriptions for board members
- 1.1.4 Stagger terms of office

Objective 1.2 Improve education/orientation for board members

Strategies:

- 1.2.1 Yearly orientation program and review on board responsibilities and legal considerations
- 1.2.2 Establish leadership qualification program
- 1.2.3 Review and update by-laws

Objective 1.3 Review and adjust election of directors and officers

Strategies:

- 1.3.1 Research other association mandates
- 1.3.2 Association attorney to research
- 1.3.3 Utilize programs offered by American Society of Association Executives (ASAE)

Responsible Entity: Staff

GOAL 2 Update and enhance association committee structure to encourage greater member participation and involvement

Objective 2.1 Review and enhance association committee structure

Strategies:

- 2.1.1 Research information available from the ASAE
- 2.1.2 Reduce and consolidate common functions into fewer committees
- 2.1.3 Increase member size of committees
- 2.1.4 Provide links to committee activities on Web
- 2.1.5 Provide committee mandate and job descriptions for each committee
- 2.1.5 Update committee structure to include committee on professional development and training and PR/Marketing

Responsible Entity: Staff

Objective 2.2 Improve recognition of committee accomplishments

Strategies:

- 2.2.1 Recognition in association newsletter
- 2.2.2 Recognition on web site
- 2.2.3 Recognition at annual convention

Responsible Entity: Staff

Objective 2.3 Improve recruitment of committee members

Strategies:

- 2.3.1 Request committee volunteers through association communication mediums.
- 2.3.2 Ask new members what committees they would like to serve on.

Responsible Entity: Membership and Public Relations Committees

GOAL 3	Increase membership and establish a membership retention program for RMCMI
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Objective 3.1 **Increase memberships by net 20% over a 12 month period**

Strategies:

- 3.1.1 Expand membership committee to 5 members
- 3.1.2 Develop membership campaign
- 3.1.3 Identify who are not members and develop prospect data base
- 3.1.4 Develop membership kit that presents the features and benefits of membership
- 3.1.5 Initiate Membership Ambassador Program
- 3.1.6 One on One Recruiting Campaign, advertise on web site
- 3.1.7 Develop relationships with University and trade schools
- 3.1.8 Review, update membership categories
- 3.1.9 Assess the potential for a Corporate support program to enhance benefits to employers of employee membership in RMCMI

Objective 3.2 **Develop membership retention program**

Strategies:

- 3.2.1 Create exit questionnaire for non-renewing members
- 3.2.2 Survey membership on value of member benefits and services and on new programs wanted
- 3.2.3 Monthly focus on a member benefits in newsletter and on web site

Responsible Entity: Membership Committee

GOAL 4	Review and enhance member benefits and services
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Objective 4.1 Identify member benefits and services and determine potential to enhance those services

Strategies:

- 4.1.1 Create benefit/services 5 person task force
- 4.1.2 Conduct benefits and services inventory
- 4.1.3 Financial analysis of benefits and services
- 4.1.4 Research other association's benefits and services programs
- 4.1.5 Survey membership on benefits and services they would like to see offered

Responsible Entity: Staff

GOAL 5	Review, update, and enhance the Institute's communications programs for interacting with members, the public and other stakeholders
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Objective 5.1 Review RMCMI overall communications program

Strategies:

- 5.1.1 Review association image with members and the public
- 5.1.2 Work with a PR professional
- 5.1.3 Evaluate name change for association
- 5.1.4 Develop criteria for evaluating association's communication materials
- 5.1.5 Survey membership as to how they like to be communicated with and determine if association materials effective in communicating the association message and image.
- 5.1.6 Take advantage of new communication technologies, blogs, webinars, film clips, etc.
- 5.1.7 Create a 5 member Public Relations Committee

Responsible Entity: Public Relations Committee

GOAL 6 Provide quality education programs to improve and enhance engineer and technician, industry mine rescue, and management skills.

Objective 6.1 Develop RMCMI education programs that enhance professional skills of engineers

Strategies:

- 6.1.1 Develop educational survey to collect member's ideas on educational needs.
- 6.1.2 Research educational offerings presently available
- 6.1.3 Develop annual educational calendar for professional development
- 6.1.4 Broaden and develop annual/quarterly programs as well as webinars, on-line programs and workshops
- 6.1.5 Expanded educational offerings at annual convention
- 6.1.6 Expand Professional Development committee to five members

Responsible Entity: Professional Development Committee

Objective 6.2 Develop RMCMI education programs that enhance management skills of mining professionals

Strategies:

- 6.2.1 Develop educational survey to collect member's ideas on management skills educational needs
- 6.2.2 Research educational offerings presently available
- 6.2.3 Develop annual educational calendar for management skill development
- 6.2.4 Broaden and develop annual/quarterly programs as well as webinars, on-line programs and workshops
- 6.2.5 Expand educational offerings at convention

Responsible Entity: Professional Development Committee

Objective 6.3 Develop RMCMI education programs that enhance the professional skills of technicians.

Strategies:

- 6.3.1 Develop educational survey to collect member's ideas on educational needs of technicians.
- 6.3.2 Research educational offerings presently available
- 6.3.3 Develop annual educational calendar for technician development
- 6.3.4 Broaden and develop annual/quarterly programs as well as webinars, on-line programs and workshops
- 6.3.5 Expanded educational offerings at annual convention

Responsible Entity: Professional Development Committee

Objective 6.4 Review and enhance association mine rescue program

Strategies:

- 6.4.1 Review and analyze existing mine rescue program
- 6.4.2 Survey membership on ideas for the mine rescue program
- 6.4.3 Survey graduates for new program ideas
- 6.3.4 Expanded mine rescue offerings throughout the year

Responsible Entity: Mine Rescue Committee

GOAL 7	Create new non dues revenue for the Institute
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Objective 7.1 **Expand by 20% the association's revenue through non dues income**

Strategies:

- 7.1.1 Utilize resources of CSAE in new program development
- 7.1.2 Create non dues revenue 5 person task force
- 7.1.3 Survey members, companies, and academic sources on programs and benefits that they would use through the association.
- 7.1.4 Research other association non dues revenue programs

Responsible Entity: Finance Committee

GOAL 8	Create a mentoring program to enhance the integration of new engineers and technicians into the industry
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Objective 8.1 **Develop mentor program that assists new engineers and technicians to easily assimilate into the industry**

Strategies:

- 8.1.1 Create a 5 member mentor program task force for developing program
- 8.1.2 Research like associations for examples of mentoring programs
- 8.1.3 Utilize CSAE resources in program development
- 8.1.4 Develop criteria for qualifying individuals for the program
- 8.1.5 Develop working relationships with Universities, Colleges, and trade schools to promote program
- 8.1.6 Develop working relationships with mining companies for endorsement of mentor program
- 8.1.7 Incorporate program into association web site

Responsible Entity: Professional Development Committee