

Beat: News

Collapse at West Virginia coal mine kills 2 workers

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USPA News - Two mine workers were killed in the U.S. state of West Virginia on Monday night when a coal mine caved in during retreat mining operations, considered one of the most dangerous forms of mining, federal officials and the company said Tuesday. The accident occurred at around 8:30 p.m. local time on Monday at Brody Mine No.

1 near the coal town of Wharton in Boone County, West Virginia. "Rescue efforts later determined that the miners did not survive, and the miners' bodies have been recovered," said Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) spokeswoman Amy Louviere. Janine Orf, a spokeswoman for Missouri-based Patriot Coal Corp., which owns the mine, said the victims died after a severe coal burst while the mine was conducting retreat mining operations, which is a hazardous technique that involves the excavation of a chamber while leaving behind pillars of material for support. The company identified the victims as Eric Legg, 48, and Gary Hensley, 46, both employees of Patriot's Brody Mining subsidiary. "We express our deepest sympathies to Eric's and Gary's families, friends and co-workers," said Mike Day, Executive Vice President of Operations at Patriot. Day said the company would fully cooperate with state and federal mine regulatory agencies to investigate Monday's deadly accident, which marked the fourth and fifth coal mining deaths in the United States so far this year. There were a total of 20 coal mining deaths last year, according to MSHA figures. The most recent coal mining disaster in the United States happened in April 2010 when an explosion ripped through the Upper Big Branch mine in Raleigh County, West Virginia, killing 29 out of 31 miners at the site. It was the worst mine disaster in the United States since 1970 when 38 miners were killed in Hyden, Kentucky.

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