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U.S. Department of Labor
Office of Public Affairs
Washington, D.C.
Release Number: 13-820-DAL

For Immediate Release

May 7, 2013

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MSHA, US Lime reach settlement in 2010 mine death

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Department of Labor’s Mine Safety and Health Administration today announced that it has reached a settlement of \$211,002 with U.S. Lime Co. in the May 2010 death of a maintenance manager at St. Clair Mine in Marble City, Okla. The settlement involves 39 citations and orders issued in the wake of the accident and during subsequent mine inspections.

U.S. Lime also has agreed to accept a flagrant violation of Section 57.12016 of the Code of Federal Regulations, which requires electrically powered equipment to be de-energized before any mechanical work is performed. That single penalty was assessed by MSHA at \$150,600.

According to MSHA’s accident investigation report, Wilbur A. Farris was fatally injured while in a roller mill that was not properly locked out and de-energized. The roller mill started while Farris was inside. Investigators found that the linkage from the breaker box handle to the electrical circuit breaker for the lower portion of the vertical roller mill was missing and, consequently, moving the handle to the “off” position did not de-energize the power. They determined that management engaged in aggravated conduct constituting more than ordinary negligence in that two supervisors were present at the time of the accident.

“As I’ve often stated, mine fatalities are preventable,” said Joseph A. Main, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health. “This accident occurred because mine management failed to ensure that safe work procedures were being followed while performing maintenance and mechanical work in the roller mill.”

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