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New Head of MSHA to Hold First Quarterly Stakeholder Conference Call

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On February 12, 2018, new Assistant Secretary David G. Zatezalo will hold his first quarterly stakeholder/training call since being confirmed as head of the agency. This stakeholder call is one of the first formal opportunities for the mining community to interact directly with Mr. Zatezalo since his confirmation, providing a glimpse into what can be expected from the agency in terms of inspection practices and rulemaking. During his confirmation process, Mr. Zatezalo mentioned compliance assistance, education, and increased usage of technology as areas he plans to emphasize as Assistant Secretary. Mr. Zatezalo may mention new initiatives in these areas during the call, or respond to questions regarding future initiatives.

The upcoming call will discuss recent fatalities and close-calls, including the topics of seat belt usage and general power haulage safety, as those areas were related to four fatalities in 2017. According to an MSHA press release, speakers will further discuss the latest on the proposed workplace examination rule, currently slated to take effect on March 2, 2018. However, with several postponements of the effective date occurring already, the mining community would not be surprised to see an additional delay in the March 2, 2018 effective date. This topic is particularly interesting to the stakeholders, as the general consensus is that rulemaking under the new MSHA may be significantly slower than under Joe Main's agency. The call will also touch on the approaching deadline for proximity detection installation on continuous mining machines.

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