



Summer 2025
Second Quarter

Fire in the Hole Scroll

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Education, Quality Presentations, Networking & Fun at BITW 2025

Recap written by Jim McNulty, Treasurer BHC ISEE & BitW Conference

The 36th Annual Best in the West Drill and Blast Conference was held at the Spearfish Holiday Inn & Convention Center on April 23rd, 24th, and 25th, 2025. Registrations for this year's conference was just under 270 people with about 20 folks registering at the conference (walk-ins).

SUPPLIER BOOTHS

We had 37 booths set up for suppliers (34) and colleges (3). Vendors came from as far away as Florida and California. College booths represented schools in South Dakota, Montana, and Missouri.

We had several new vendors this year and are glad for their attendance. They had heard positive comments about the conference and we thank attendees for spreading the word. We should note that many years we have seen attendees from foreign countries including our neighbors in Canada, Australia, South America, and China.



▲ Nelson Brothers have exhibited at the BITW for many years. Nice light-up display!
Photo credit: WorldWide Drilling Resource

PLANNING

Preparations for the conference begin shortly after the conclusion of the current event. The Conference Planning Committee is comprised of ISEE chapter members from the Northern Plains Chapter in Gillette, WY, and the Black Hills Chapter, based out of Rapid City, SD.

They meet within a few weeks after the current year's conference to review the event, review feedback from a follow-up survey, and discuss possible changes for the next year's conference. We had this year's follow-up meeting on June 3rd, and planning is already underway for the 37th Conference to be held April 22nd, 23rd, & 24th, 2026.



CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 ►

Cont'd: Education, Scholarships & Treasures



◀ Education is the main purpose of BITW.

Lexi Maier with the ▶
Holiday Inn presents a
check to Baron Fidler for
a scholarship donation.
It is much appreciated!

Photo credits: Worldwide
Drilling Resource



We must acknowledge the tremendous involvement, support & continuing contribution that Carrie Jaeger (Sayre Associates) makes to the conference each year. Her ongoing "help" is a key factor in our success and is greatly appreciated!

PURPOSE: EDUCATION

The main purpose of the conference is education: continuing education credits for drillers & blasters and monetary scholarships for students studying in related fields.

We accomplish this by providing high quality presentations by industry experts concerning various aspects of drilling, blasting, monitoring, and related equipment, materials, regulations and practices and requirements. Session attendees sign in to each session and we accumulate attendance records for the regulators who credit training hours to attendees – one of the requirements for maintaining certifications.

SCHOLARSHIPS

We also award scholarships to select college students who submit an application package to our dedicated review committee in the months leading up to the conference. These scholarship are funded by the profits and direct scholarship donations from the conference.

The 2025 conference awarded over \$19,000 in scholarships to 16 students, with individual awards ranging from \$500 to \$3,000.

Depending on the year, the conference and

individual chapters contribute to National ISEE endowed scholarship funds, and to the local chapter scholarships and charity needs, managed by Northern Plains and Black Hills Chapters.

TREASURES FROM JOE WOOD

We would also like to acknowledge a special fund raising effort that occurred at BitW 2025. The family of long time BHC ISEE member, Joe Wood, donated quality collectors items to the BitW Conference, from Joe's estate. Joe passed away in 2023.

The items were donated for fund raising for scholarships. Close to \$3,000 was raised from your generosity in liquidating the donated items. This money will be used over the next few years for special scholarships awarded at the conference.

Note that Joe Wood's family has also donated

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3 ▶

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"An apple a day will keep anyone away,
if thrown hard enough."

Cont'd: Wednesday Activities at BITW 2025

an additional \$1,000 cash for the last two years for scholarships awarded in 2024 and 2025.

WEDNESDAY ACTIVITIES

Other activities during the conference include Wednesday morning activities at the 2025 conference. This year we continued to have three activities available for attendees:

- * The Paul Muehl Trap Shoot (proceeds sent to the Paul Muehl Scholarship Fund at National ISEE)
- * The Bob Martin Golf Scramble (proceeds sent to the Bob Martin Scholarship Fund at National ISEE)
- * The Crazy Horse Memorial Mountain Tour

These are very popular events with the Trap Shoot and Golf Scramble charging minimal fees to cover costs, and Crazy Horse Memorial waiving fees for admission and for a coveted trip to the Mountain Top for this event. We had well over 120 people attend these three special events for 2025, and make significant contributions to the two ISEE Scholarship funds – which are now



▲ Mountain Crew was on hand (on an arm?!) to answer questions and point out the progress.
Photo credit: WorldWide Drilling Resource

endowed to well over \$100,000 each.

In summary, once again it was a great conference with your support! Thank you to all. It is a pleasure to be involved with such a Great Group!

-Jim McNulty, Treasurer BHC ISEE & BitW Conference



Charlie Phillips · 1st
Florida Energy Services Inc

This was posted on LinkedIn, and used with permission.

As a constant student of our profession, traveled recently to Spearfish South Dakota to attend the local ISEE chapters "Best in the

West" conference.

Not only did I learn new techniques and practices to bring back to our projects at home. I also had the privilege of sharing a presentation with conference attendees on what drilling and blasting look like in the Florida wet mining environment, and how we have to make certain "tweaks" to ensure success.

A sincere thank you to the conference organizers for the opportunity to speak and share what we do in the Sunshine State. I also enjoyed the conversations with those of you who had questions and comments afterwards as well.

A wonderful conference with great speakers, attendees and vendors. This one will be on my schedule next year and the years after for sure.



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"If Plan A didn't work, the alphabet has 25 more letters."



BITW Golf Scramble & Trap Shoot Recap

The 2025 Bob Martin Memorial Scramble was hit with eleven teams entering the tournament. Weather was favorable and made for an enjoyable morning.

A special thanks to Nelson Brothers for providing breakfast and our door prize and hole sponsors Epiroc, Enaex, Nelson Brothers, Wesco, Coeur Wharf, Buckley Powder, and Quick Supply.

Congratulations to our first-place team of Spanos, Buckley, Jensen, and Evers. It was a great time; can't wait for next year!



◀ Beautiful day and beautiful views!
(Photo by Garth Evers)



◀ Congrats to the winning team of Spanos, Buckley, Jensen and Evers.
(Photo by Garth Evers)

On Wednesday morning with good weather, the Trap Shoot event brought together 25 eager participants, making for a spirited and memorable competition.

- First Place: Travis Davidsavor claimed the top spot with an impressive performance.
- Last Place: Dustin Jenner rounded out the field, demonstrating great sportsmanship and perseverance.
- Noteworthy Newcomer: Patricia Lim, participating in her first event, gave a strong showing and did not finish last—an achievement worth celebrating.



◀ Patricia Lim joined us as a first time shooter. It took a number of tries before the first clay was broke, but we all knew it happened with the excitement!

▼ Good group of shooters



Participants enjoyed a hearty meal provided by Pooter Q of Belle Fourche, which was much appreciated after a morning on the range.

The event featured an array of excellent prizes, ensuring that many participants went home with something memorable. Highlights included: backpacks provided by Austin Powder, drink mugs courtesy of Sterk Underground, hats and assorted other prizes. Thanks suppliers!!

It was clear from the enthusiastic turnout and positive stories that everyone in attendance had a fantastic time. With good food, great prizes, and the shared experience of friendly competition, this event will be warmly remembered by all who participated.



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"Don't let your ice cream melt while you are counting someone else's sprinkles."

Congratulations to the Best in the West Student Scholarship Recipients

2025 BITW Scholarship Recipients



Zoe Dodd



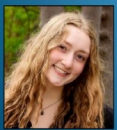
Joshua Whajah



Grace Jenuine



Rutger Shultz



Eliza Watson



Eric Starkey



Gloria Apaza



Luke Guzman

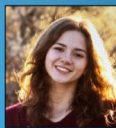
2025 BITW Scholarship Recipients



Allie Palm



Dozick Zablocki



Josilin Gustafson



Sam DeMelo



Presten Ehrlich



Nathan Haglin



Bradyn Bath



Aser Kalkoumdo

<u>Name</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Zoe Dodd	SDSM&T	\$3,000
Joshua Whajah	SDSM&T	\$2,500
Grace Jenuine	SDSM&T	\$2,000
Rutger Shultz	MTU	\$1,500
Eliza Watson	Utah	\$1,500
Eric Starkey	Utah	\$1,000
Gloria Apaza	SDSM&T	\$1,000

Coeur Wharf Scholarship Recipient

Luke Guzman	SDSM&T	\$500
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Joe Wood Scholarship Recipient		\$1,000
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Allie Palm	MTU	\$1,000
------------	-----	---------

Dozick Zablocki	MTU	\$1,000
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Josilin Gustafson	MTU	\$500
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Sam DeMelo	MTU	\$500
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Presten Ehrlich	MTU	\$500
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Nathan Haglin	MTU	\$500
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Bradyn Bath	Utah	\$500
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Aser Kalkoumdo	SDSM&T	\$500
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TOTAL: \$19,000

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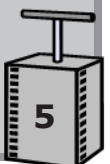
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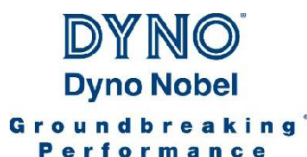
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"My mind is like my internet browser: 19 tabs open, 3 of them are frozen, and I have no idea where the music is coming from."



Thank You to all the BITW Sponsors & Contributors:

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OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

ISEE, Partridge Auction Services, Visit Spearfish

*...and THANKS to the BITW Planning Committee: Darcey Baker,
Megan Buurma Marvin, Garth Evers, Baron Fidler, Dylan Haddix,
Thom Hunter, Jim McNulty, Randy Russell, Paul Sterk,
Tony Troughon and Eric Weyer*

...and THANKS to all attendees, contributors, exhibitors, and speakers!

Photos from Best in the West 2025

Photo credit: Photos taken by WorldWide Drilling Resource. Thanks WWDR!



Compliments of WorldWide Drilling Resource® 2025

▲ A **big thank you** to the exhibitors who ensured a fun and informational Exhibit Hall. Thanks for sharing your businesses with us!



Compliments of WorldWide Drilling Resource® 2025

▲ Emily Arthun of the American Coal Council provided encouragement for us to talk with others how drilling, blasting, mining and minerals are essential.



Compliments of WorldWide Drilling Resource® 2025

▲ Scott Narreau (State of CO) spoke at the Regulatory Session.



Compliments of WorldWide Drilling Resource® 2025

▲ An auction item created by the Crazy Horse Mountain Crew

Paul Sterk ► presents Cory Redeker (Quick Supply) with the 2025 Supplier Appreciation Award



Compliments of WorldWide Drilling Resource® 2025

▲ The Suppliers Award was made by Blasters Tool & Supply

Walt Partridge ► returned as auctioneer to help raise money for scholarships. The live auction is really fun, but moves very fast!



Compliments of WorldWide Drilling Resource® 2025

The meals ► were served poolside and offered lots of options. All good!



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Compliments of WorldWide Drilling Resource® 2025

◀ Paul Sterk thanks BHC President Darcey Baker with a personalized, custom lunch box.





Blasting Activities and Explosives Handling

Reminders from the MSHA website, with a few additional thoughts

Any misfired explosive in the muckpile must be recovered and disposed of in the proper manner. What does proper manner really mean? Do not try to field evaluate the misfired/recovered primer. Pictures are good, but do not use force to remove the detonator from the booster or stick powder. Do not “test” the detonator on the bench. If the detonator can be easily removed, then you may want to disassemble the primer. If the detonator can’t be easily removed, then keep the primer assembly intact. Tape or secure to a new primer and place down to new blasthole to ensure the recovered primer is used for the intended purpose.

Regulatory References: MSHA 30 CFR

§57.6306 Loading, Blasting, and Security

- (3) All access routes to the blast area shall be guarded or barricaded to prevent the passage of persons or vehicles.
- (g) Work shall not be resumed in the blast area until a post blast examination addressing potential blast-related hazards has been conducted by a person with the ability and experience to perform the examination.

§57.6310 Misfire waiting period

When a misfire is suspected, persons shall not enter the blast area:

- (a) For 30 minutes if safety fuse and blasting caps are used.
- (b) For 15 minutes if any other type detonators are used.

§57.6311 Handling of misfires

- (a) Faces and muck piles shall be examined for misfires after each blasting operation.
- (b) Only the work necessary to remove a misfire and protect the safety of those engaged in the removal shall be permitted in the affected area until the misfire is disposed of in a safe manner.
- (c) When a misfire cannot be disposed of safely, each approach to the area affected by the misfire shall be posted with a warning sign at a conspicuous location to prohibit entry, and the condition shall be reported immediately to mine management.
- (d) Misfires occurring during the shift shall be reported to mine management no later than the end of the shift.

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“You don’t have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step.”

– Martin Luther King, Jr.



What's Happening

Reports & News From Around the Industry

Hawkins Appointed as New Executive Director

From ISEE News on March 19, 2025. Found online at isee.org/about-isee/isee-news

The Board of Directors of the International Society of Explosives Engineers (ISEE) is pleased to announce the appointment of Buck Hawkins as new Executive Director. Buck started the position on March 17, becoming the fourth Executive Director of the organization.

Buck began his explosives career as a combat engineer with the Ohio Army National Guard. He served as a demolition instructor teaching nonelectric systems for breaching applications. After receiving a bachelor's degree in communications from Morehead State University, he enrolled at Missouri S&T and completed a bachelor's in mining engineering and master's in explosives engineering.

During this time Buck deployed to Iraq and Qatar and finished a Graduate Certificate in Homeland Security and Defense from Missouri

State University.

Following his last deployment, he served as Director of Education and Training at the ISEE and worked with blasters programs and chapter outreach.

In 2015, Buck completed the US Army Sergeant's Major Academy and began working for Sauls Seismic as Chief Operating Officer. He specialized in operational efficiency, best practices training, data management, and team building.

Buck is extremely excited to be back with the ISEE and is looking forward to working with the board and staff to grow the organization by developing new training programs, improving operations and enhancing the ISEE's engagement with members.

Wyoming DEQ Blasting Program Updates

Credit Hours From the Best in the West Drill and Blast Conference

The conference was approved for up to 14.5 hours in the Wyoming Blasting Program. Contact Reo Barney at 307-675-5612 or reo.barney@wyo.gov for hours from the 2025

conference, which should be available soon.



Wyoming Blaster Certification Class in Gillette, WY November 18-20, 2025

Wyoming DEQ will hold a Blaster Certification class November 18-20, 2025, at Gillette College Tech Center, 3251 S 4-J Rd Gillette, WY. To register, please contact Reo Barney at (307) 675-5612 or reo.barney@wyo.gov.

TENTATIVE: Wyoming Blaster Certification Class in Salt Lake City, UT January 13-15, 2026

Wyoming DEQ will TENTATIVELY hold a Blaster Certification class January 13-15, 2026. Location is TBA. To register, please contact Reo at reo.barney@wyo.gov or (307) 675-5612.

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"Only the guy who isn't rowing has time to rock the boat."



What's Happening

Reports & News From Around the Industry

SD Mines Mining & Mucking Teams Strike Gold at World Championships

From SD Mines News on April 22, 2025. Found online at www.sdsmt.edu/news/releases

There is no AI or machine learning, and the vehicles are far from autonomous. Instead, it is a trip back into the old-fashioned mining days and the raw determination that went with it.

It is that same determination, hours of practice and camaraderie that fueled the passion and victory of the South Dakota Mines Mining and Mucking Teams at the 47th Annual International Collegiate Mining Competition in Camborne, England.

Mines took three teams, including an alumni group, who placed first in the co-ed and alumni contests and eighth out of 17 teams in the men's highly competitive division. A total of 45 teams from the United States, Australia, Canada, Germany and England participated in the competition.

What the Muck is This All About?

The mining games incorporate historical mining methods and practices, many of which were employed in the Black Hills following the 1876 gold rush. Skills demonstrated at the annual games include operating a pneumatic drill called a jackleg, hand steel, using a hammer and set of chisels to drill holes for explosives, and swede saw; mucking, the original method used by miners to shovel ore or "muck" into a cart after it was blasted out of the mine

walls; mine surveying; gold panning; and track standing which requires contestants to erect a section of railroad track.

The competition's "muck" and equipment reflect the host institution's location.



▲ SD Mines Full Co-ed Team



▲ SD Mines Men's Full Team

"Most schools try to match the muck with what historically they mined. When Kentucky hosted it, the muck was coal since that is what they mine," said Will Ford, a sophomore mechanical engineering major and captain of the men's team.

The first day of competition allows participants to get familiar with the unique equipment before the games begin.

Hammerschlagen 2.0, the coed team, placed first overall but also first in jackleg, track stand, and swede saw; second in mucking; and third in hand steel.

The men's team, Holy Terrors, placed second in mucking and third in surveying, the hardest of the competitions, with teams within a hundredth of an inch of each other.

The alumni team, who hasn't practiced since they were students on the team, won the overall alumni division and placed first in jackleg and surveying, second in track stand, and third in hand steel and mucking.

To continue reading, check out:

<https://www.sdsmt.edu/news/releases/2025miningandmuckingteam.html>



An email from Professor Andrea Brickey of South Dakota Mines:

Hello –

Cindy Hise touched many lives with kindness, laughter, and spirit. To remember and honor her legacy, a memorial bench has been placed in front of the Nucor Mineral Industries building on South Dakota Mines campus with funds donated by numerous alumni.

Please join us for a special dedication ceremony to commemorate Cindy's many contributions to campus.

Following the ceremony: Guests are invited to share memories and stories of Cindy Hise with family and friends in Nucor Mineral Industries Room 101.

Black Hills Chapter Contacts

Here are the 2025-2026 Black Hills Chapter Officers and Board of Directors. If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please contact one of these members. Your suggestions are greatly appreciated.

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