

PA DEP Employees Recognized as TIPS “Outstanding Contributors” for 2010

by Karyn Evans

Did you know TIPS recognizes individuals who contribute significantly to the TIPS program during the annual TIPS Steering Committee awards program? This year’s recipients, Richard Lamkie and William Shuss, both from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, received the TIPS “Outstanding Contributor Award” for being proactive in using TIPS products throughout PA, and for teaching their use throughout the country. They have been, and continue to be, instrumental in placing the Global Positioning System (GPS) technology and surface mine blasting evaluation capabilities of TIPS software into the hands of the field inspectors, and make the technologies understandable and useable to the people that “get the job done” on a daily basis. They constantly reinforce the importance of technology and collaboration between the various District Mining Operations within PA, and the software provided by TIPS is one of the center pieces.



Award recipient Rick Lamkie, right, in the field with students

Rick and Bill are course developers and instructors for two TIPS training courses; Blast Log Evaluation Program (BLEP) and Introduction to GPS with Garmin eTrex Vista HCx (Garmin). For the last four years, the Garmin class has been the most requested TIPS class with nearly 300 students successfully completing the class during this time. Rick and Bill developed a tailored Garmin class for all PA inspectors, and have delivered ten classes to over 130 inspectors. The inspectors are now required to use GPS on a daily basis to document disturbed and reclaimed acreages for full cost bonding, and often use them to document locations of highwalls, water samples, and



Bill Shuss helps a student at the “Introduction to GPS with Garmin” Class

complaints. These data are then imported into TopoFusion or other TIPS software for map generation or GIS assimilation. The end result of their efforts is effectively “no inspector left behind” on the GPS/GIS technology ladder. For inspectors that have an interest in transcending the initial rung of the GIS technology ladder, Bill in particular takes the initiative to illustrate other TIPS products such as Trimble GPS and ArcGIS.

BLEP is extensively used in the day-to-day administration of the PA Explosives program and Rick and Bill teach the class to a wide range of blasting specialists nationally. They had the program modified to specifically address the unique PA blasting regulations, and as a result, BLEP is now used by most PA Explosives inspectors for complaint reviews. Rick and Bill’s extensive use of BLEP in PA is used to demonstrate the utility of the software to students in the formal TIPS BLEP class.

Rick and Bill’s creative leadership provides learning opportunities for PA field staff to work in cooperation with industry and state management to make permitting and operational decisions and their training efforts illustrate to other states the benefits of TIPS products.

Opportunistically, they recruit new TIPS instructors through delivery of on-site classes (i.e. champions within PA) to further the GIS/GPS effort in the organization and give employees a local point of contact to go to for information and/or resolution of problems.

OSM and TIPS values Rick and Bill's efforts in advancing the uses of technology and for creating an environment of knowledge sharing and team support, and therefore formally recognizes them as "Outstanding Contributors" to TIPS.