

Bin Rescue Workshop

FIRST GEAPS-SPONSORED WORKSHOP A SUCCESS, TWO MORE PLANNED FOR 2006



Participants in the first-ever GEAPS three-day bin rescue workshop learn how to perform a rescue in large storage tanks at Star of the West Milling Co.'s elevator in Gera, MI. Photos by Gary Pickelman, Star of the West.

The Grain Elevator and Processing Society's first-ever three-day bin-rescue training course in late June was a sellout. Registration for the class in Frankenmuth, MI was limited to 30, and that's the number of participants from around the United States and Canada who came.

As a result, the GEAPS International board of directors has voted to schedule two more courses in 2006. The first will be held May 9-11 in Berlin, MD, and the second will return to Frankenmuth June 13-15.

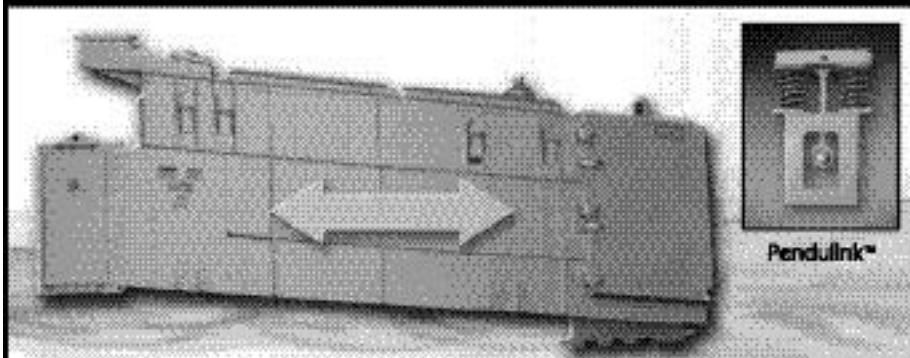
Hands-On Focus

The course is designed to raise awareness about bin rescue procedures and equipment and provides extensive hands-on training. Participants gain experience working in grain bins and using such technical rescue equipment as ropes and harnesses, cofferdams, rappel racks, carabiners, mechanical advantage systems, communications systems, anchorage points, and victim "packaging."

The course is taught by the Safety and Technical Rescue Association (SATRA), a nonprofit group comprised of volunteers in several Midwestern states and Ontario. SATRA provides search-and-rescue services and training for a wide range of emergency situations in the United States and internationally. The association assists local first responders when they need help or specialized equipment or skills.

"SATRA is probably one of the most experienced and best-equipped group in the world at this sort of rescue training," said Wayne Bauer, GEAPS international board chairman and safety director for Star of the West Milling

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“Victim” Mike Mero from Hensall District Co-op in Hensall, ON simulates a grain entrapment situation.



The use of a metal cofferdam prevents additional grain from cascading down onto entrapped victims and relieves pressure from grain during the rescue.

Co. in Frankenmuth. (Star of the West hosted the training course, with much of the hands-on training at its grain elevator in nearby Gera, MI.)

“We know what they do, and we’re really pleased that we’ll be able to provide this service to our members and others. GEAPS has been dedicated to bin safety for a long time, and this program will add an important new dimension to that commitment.”

The GEAPS course focuses exclusively on grain bin safety and rescue and is not intended for general industry.

Bauer said anyone with responsibilities relating to bin safety is en-



Participants also learned how to perform rescues from small confined spaces. The GSI Group and Brock Grain Systems donated equipment for the course.

couraged to enroll in the 2006 courses. Grain industry professionals also might want to consider inviting representa-

tives from their local fire departments or emergency response teams, to provide them with background on grain ▶

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A pneumatic conveying system such as this Walinga Agri-Vac can be an important tool in extracting victims entrapped in grain.

bin rescue techniques and equipment. “Over the past several years, GEAPS has provided numerous programs and a lot of information about binsafety, proper bin entry, and so on, and now we’re

taking it a step further,” said Kevin Danner, GEAPS international president and corporate safety director for West Central Cooperative in Ralston, IA. “Prevention and elimination of

grain bin entrapments will continue to be our primary focus, but because people do become entrapped in grain, the program will discuss and demonstrate the best techniques for their safe removal.”

Registration Information

Registration for the second and third courses will begin at a later date. However, waiting lists have been developed. To get on a list, contact Amy McGarrigle at amy@geaps.com and state which course you would like to attend.

Class size will be limited to 30 in both upcoming courses and will be available on a first-come, first-served basis.

SATRA has developed the course content and training materials and will continue to maintain a good instructor-to-student ratio. GEAPS is marketing the programs and handling registration. Discounted fees will be available for GEAPS members.

For more information, contact GEAPS at 612-339-4625.

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