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2021 NOV 10 Pennsylvania Anthracite Section SME held a field trip the Penn Big Bed Slate quarry in Slatedale, Pennsylvania, as arranged by Section Secretary Eric Bella. The group met for lunch at the Palmerton Pub, covered safety hazard training, and then regrouped for the quarry tour guided by Mike Piersa of the National Museum of Industrial History in Bethlehem, PA.

The visit included observations of the slate deposit's geological variations, historical quarrying methods and equipment, environmental and safety aspects of the mining operation, processing/finishing for many varying slate uses, (ranging from high quality, custom construction materials including slate roofing, slate flooring, countertops, windowsills, to chalk and artist boards, benches, and the smallest item: turkey calls)! The business does not advertise, they rely of word of mouth from satisfied customers.

Background information on the quarry:

Penn Big Bed Slate Company (PBBS) had been a family-owned enterprise since its founding in 1934 by Jacob Papay and his four sons John, Tom, Mike, Steve and his son-in-law Steve Babyak. Today Pete Papay Sr. and his son Pete Papay Jr. are the 3rd and 4th generation quarriers. In 2005 Penn Big Bed merged with The Dally Slate Company of Pen Argyl, PA. The management team today of the 2 slate quarries is Peter J. Papay Sr., Peter J. Papay Jr., and John Dally Jr.

Today PBBS is a proven source of high-quality Pennsylvania slate, with manufacturing facilities capable of producing virtually any type of architectural slate product, or products which make use of slate.

After Mike Piersa and Pete Papay Jr. led the tour of the quarry and surface processing, the group met Mr. Pete Papay, Sr., the owner of the quarry, who did a great job of covering the realities and challenges his business faces in this Covid pandemic and logistical world.

Photo of PA Anthracite SME Section group in Big Bed Slate's quarry: photo _6368 Left to right:

Quarry supervisor Pete Papay, Jr., Mike Piersa, Brian Redmond, Joe Kim, John Panzitta,

John Mack, Angela Meck, Perry Hoover, and Eric Bella, (PA Anthracite SME Section's Secretary and organizer of the slate quarry field trip).

2 additional photos showing _6383 operator finishing surface of custom slate blackboard, and
_6388 craftsman describing cutting of custom slate windowsills