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Moab man killed in uranium mine accident in southeastern Utah

by Lisa J. Church

staff writer

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A rock fall inside the Pandora uranium mine near La Sal fatally injured one worker early Wednesday morning, May 26, according to officials with Denison Mines Corp.

“We’re not sure exactly what happened,” said Ron Hochstein, president and CEO of Denison Mines, the Canada-based company that owns the Pandora facility, which is located in the southern region of the La Sal Mountains in San Juan County.

Hochstein said the accident occurred at about 7:30 a.m. The man was reached by rescuers within 10 minutes and was initially conscious, but soon died from extensive internal injuries, Hochstein said.

The miner, Hunter Diehl, 28, of Moab, was an employee of Reliance Resources. The Moab-based company is contracted to operate the mine for Denison Mines, Hochstein said. All the other miners who were working at the facility on Wednesday are safe and have been accounted for, he said.

The San Juan County Sheriff’s Office was notifying the man’s relatives on Wednesday, Hochstein said.

“He was given CPR by rescue workers, and was transported to a hospital where he was pronounced dead,” Hochstein said.

The miner had only worked at the site for about three months, Hochstein said.

The federal Mine Safety and Health Administration has been notified and will be investigating, Hochstein said, and the mine has been shut down pending that investigation.

“At this point we don’t know what happened, but we’ll be doing a full investigation,” Hochstein said.

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