

OREGON INDEPENDENT AGGREGATE ASSOCIATION

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August 2026 Newsletter

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Editorial: A Turning Point for Mine Safety

Recent MSHA data reveals a concerning divergence in mine safety trends: overall injury rates are declining, yet fatal incidents are increasing nationwide. According to Pit & Quarry’s Market Reference Guide 2026, “mining fatalities increased 27 percent last year to total 33,” and as of May 26, 2026, MSHA had already reported “13 mining fatalities this year.” Most 2025 fatalities occurred at metal/nonmetal operations, and machinery incidents have emerged as the leading cause in 2026.

In contrast, MSHA reports that the total recordable injury rate fell to an all-time low in 2025, dropping to “1.74 per 200,000 hours worked.” This improvement reflects stronger day-to-day safety practices, better reporting, and increased training across the industry.

For OIAA members, this split trend carries an important message: routine safety performance is improving, but high-severity hazards remain a persistent threat. Powered haulage, machinery entanglements, falls, and non-routine tasks continue to drive fatal incidents—events that are rare but catastrophic.

MSHA has renewed alliances with NSSGA and AEM to expand training resources, share best practices, and strengthen safety culture across the mining and aggregates sectors. These partnerships are designed to help operators and contractors address the very hazards driving recent fatalities.

Oregon operations are not exempt from these national patterns. Even well-run sites face elevated risks when production pressures, staffing challenges, or equipment limitations intersect with complex tasks. OIAA encourages members to:

- Reevaluate critical-task procedures, especially around machinery and powered haulage
- Ensure contractor alignment during high-volume or mixed-operation work
- Invest in competency-based training, not just compliance training

- Strengthen near-miss reporting, a key predictor of serious incidents

The industry's progress on reducing injuries is encouraging. But the rise in fatalities shows that we must remain vigilant and continue focusing on the hazards most likely to cause severe or fatal outcomes. A unified commitment to safety—across operators, contractors, and regulators—is essential to ensuring every worker goes home safely.

Sources:

Pit & Quarry. (2026). *Mixed signals emerge: The latest MSHA fatality and injury data shows mine safety moving in different directions.* *Market Reference Guide 2026*, 14–16.

Mine Safety & Health Administration. (2016–2026). *Fatality reports and injury rate statistics.* U.S. Department of Labor.
<https://www.msha.gov>

OIAA Annual Scholarship Opportunity DEADLINE EXTENDED!

The Oregon Independent Aggregate Association (OIAA) is pleased to offer an annual \$2,500 scholarship for students pursuing careers related to the construction, aggregate, and forestry industries. Eligible applicants include current OIAA members, employees of member companies, and their family members enrolled in or planning to attend a university, community college, private college, or trade school. Eligible fields of study include construction management, engineering, geology, forestry, heavy equipment repair, welding, architecture, and land use planning.

Members are encouraged to share this opportunity with employees and families who have eligible students who may benefit. The application emphasizes a personal statement outlining career goals, interest in the industry, and financial need. Scholarship recipients are recognized by OIAA and invited to accept the award in person at a Board Meeting. The application deadline is extended to **September 30, 2026**. Application materials are included at the end of this Newsletter.



MSHA Part 46 Training:

Albany:

Location: Linn County Fair & Expo

Date & Time: Monday, March 15th, 2027 7:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Roseburg:

Location: Douglas County Fairgrounds

Date & Time: Tuesday, March 16th, 2027 7:00 AM – 5:00 PM



Please feel free to share this opportunity with anyone who may be interested in attending—members and non-members alike. The MSHA Part 46 Training form will be sent out in the fall of 2026. Not unlike this year, it can be completed electronically using Adobe Acrobat or printed/fill it out by hand. Questions? Email Melissa at melissa.bronson@kniferiver.com

General Information:



We truly value and encourage active participation from all our members. You're invited to attend our meetings anytime. If you'd like to get more involved, share ideas for improving our association, or learn about upcoming meetings, please feel free to reach out to any of our board members.

Join the Board!

With two of our founding directors retiring, we're opening the door for fresh energy and new voices—and we'd love to have you be part of it. We're actively looking to add members to our Board of Directors, and this is a great time to get involved. If you're curious, interested, or even just thinking about it, reach out to any board member or join us at our next meeting to explore the opportunity. We'd be excited to welcome you to the conversation.

Next Meeting:

📍 **Location:** IMA (KPD) Office – Conference Room, Springfield, OR

🕒 **Date & Time:** TBD

Article Content:

We're always looking for great content to feature in our newsletter. If you have an article, safety tip, or any information you believe would benefit or interest our members, we'd love to include it. Please submit your materials to: melissa.bronson@kniferiver.com or erwinh@rfpco.com

Newsletter Changes:

We're excited to continue building community within the Oregon Independent Aggregate Association, and one great way to do that is through our Member Spotlight feature. We invite current members to submit a short spotlight showcasing their business—whether that's a quick Q&A, a fun fact about your operation, highlights of unique projects, or non-sensitive photos of your quarry, equipment, or crew. Including a brief blurb about your company helps us share your story while giving you a little extra marketing visibility. If you'd like to be featured in an upcoming edition, we'd love to hear from you.

Visit our website at www.oraggregate.com

Member Spotlight:

YOUR COMPANY HERE!

This month we don't have a Member Spotlight—apparently everyone is too humble to brag. So, here's your friendly reminder: send us a short company bio and a photo. We'd love to introduce you to the rest of the group and, yes, give you a completely shameless plug.

