

Minutes of ISSA Meeting

November 1, 2013

Welcome

x members, x guests

Ron Shuck

Scheduled Presentation

David Williams coordinated our tour with Underground Vaults and Storage. Many of us had used them for years to provide off-site storage of our backup files, but we had never seen its inner workings.

Salt Mine

An inland sea covered Kansas 230 million years ago. When this sea evaporated, it left a 400 foot thick layer of salt, extending from northern Kansas to New Mexico. In the late 1880s a wildcatter drilling for oil discovered the salt. Commercial salt mining began in 1923. Originally the salt rocks traveled to the skip by railroad. When a pair of miners had filled a rail car with four tons of salt, each got a chit worth fifty cents. Now the mining face is 2.5 miles from the original entrance and the salt rocks ride back on a conveyor belt. The mined area is 980 acres connected by 150 miles of tunnels. A two hundred year supply of salt remains underground.

We had two tours through the mine after visiting the Underground Museum. The History Tour showed old areas of the mine, with everything left just as it was when the mine face moved farther away.

“Everything coming down, stays down.” is the miner's motto. Removing discarded equipment would mean disassembling it and hauling it back to the surface. Every load of junk going up would have to displace a payload of salt. Remember the only way or down was a 650 foot trip in that 4 foot by 5 foot skip used for hauling salt.

The Dark Tour was entirely different. In the darkness, a few of us caught a fleeting glimpse of an eerie apparition with a luminous beard.

Underground Vaults & Storage

Lee Spence, the CEO of Underground Vaults and Storage, gave us a private tour of their storage facility. Its location 650 feet into the earth means a constant 68 degree temperature and 45% humidity. This makes an ideal storage environment. Mining the salt leaves voids on either side of a tunnel that are 300 feet long and 50 feet wide. Each bay holds 80,000 boxes and each box holds 10 reels of movie film. We saw reels of Dark Knight and Green Lantern. For an old-timer, there was reels of Gaslight starring Ingrid Bergman! Disney even has a refrigerated room for long term storage of their films.

Many businesses store their important files underground at Hutchinson. I didn't expect geological core drillings, Or records from 23 different countries.

Meeting: Underground Vaults & Storage Inc, Hutchinson, KS