

No more guessing about truck weights

By Randy Walters Publisher

In the recent weeks, the East Kentucky Freedom Press has been advertising a system that is fast being used in eastern Kentucky to weigh coal as it is put on the trucks, saving the truckers and coal companies on overweight tickets. Those tickets can turn a man's living into a fine in a heartbeat.

The system works off hydraulics, and allows the loader operator to know exactly how much coal he is putting into the truck at the loading site. It's manufactured by VEI and is easily used.

Steve Lerch is the distributor for the system in eastern Kentucky. Lerch, a welder by trade, has many companies now using the system in Kentucky and West Virginia. West Virginia has a mandatory law that makes the operators send in their truck weights, and if they are too heavy the state assess a fine to the company.

Kentucky has been toying with the same type plan for coal trucks, and it seems to be the direction of states that produce coal. The damage done to eastern Kentucky roads by overweight trucks, and the severity of accidents involving the trucks has the possibility of the state monitoring system closer to becoming the law.

Lerch said that because the area of surface mines is constantly changing, the trucks have to get to the permanent scales, and sometimes that means they have to travel on the



The VEI system is so small and simple to operate that its distributor says "If you can operate a TV remote, you can operate VEI."



Steve Lerch is the local distributor for VEI. Steve said overweight enforcement is making his product more and more popular.

roads before weighing.

"Our system allows the loading site to change without having to drive to the scales, or move the scales because the weights are known from the loader," he told the East Kentucky Freedom Press in an interview last Thursday.

The systems are so adaptable as to allow the loader operator to not only keep up with the weight he is loading on each truck, but to also keep track of the total amount of material hauled from

the job site by multiple trucking companies.

"It's all in pushing a button, and if you can operate a cell phone or a TV remote, you can easily operate one of our systems. They are small units that are easily installed, and they vary in operational capability from our basic unit, to one that provides a great many more functions in record keeping.

In Perry County the systems are used on the ICG sites and on B & W Coal's site just out from Wal-Mart on Ky. 80.

Lerch said that the trend for tougher overweight enforcement is making their systems more and more popular.

Other advantages of the system are that it saves companies money on paperwork because it will print out any type information needed, and it allows the company to keep tabs of the production done by the loader. "A loader might be weakening and need repair. The VEI system allows the foreman to see just how much the machine is loading in the course of a shift, an hour, or a load," Lerch said.

It also speeds up the operation by doing away with the need for the trucks to go to the scales. They can load, get their ticket from the loader operator, and deliver the coal to its destination without having to stop and weigh.

When scales are being used, the overweight trucks have to dump part of their load and repeat the weighing process. Lerch said the truckers and the loader operator are no longer going to have to guess at the weight put in

a truck because the system tells them exactly how much has been loaded.

The cost of overweight tickets has always been a problem for the truckers in the coalfields, and the VEI system is one way to get away from taking a chance on getting caught. Lerch expects many more local companies to adopt the system for the many ways it can make trucking coal more efficient.

If you have an existing system that needs serviced, or for more information about VEI call Steve Lerch at (937) 725-3475.