

## Larry Dye Talks to Coal Miner Exchange



*Larry Dye*

**Bill Reid:** *We're with Larry Dye, the President of MineQuest Inc. Larry, thank you for talking to us this afternoon. Tell us please how the company got started.*

**Larry Dye:** In 1994, with two of my former employees with Simmons-Rand I left the old Simmons-Rand company, which was sold to Long-Airdox, and we formed MineQuest Inc. with the acquisition of Cedar Electronics and Industrial Hydraulics & Service. Since then the former partners of mine have all retired and I've taken over the company. We saw a need for a high-end electronic repair facility to service the newer equipment that was more electronic than all older analog electrical driven equipment. We specialize in remote control and solid state controls.

**Bill Reid:** *What's the expertise of the company in terms of the technology that is now being put into the coal mines?*

**Larry Dye:** A lot of our employees are ex-military. We found that the military trains people to repair and service, as opposed to design, and makes it work. Our employees came to us through the Air Force, Navy, and as a matter of fact we've got all four branches of the services working now. Our chief electronics technician is ex-Navy and worked as the Chief Technician for the Seventh Fleet. Our shop foreman was stationed in Alaska as the technician for the radar installation out in Alaska. So we've got a lot of expertise in repair and making electronics and radio communication equipment function.

**Bill Reid:** *Tell us about your facilities here and some of the test equipment?*

**Larry Dye:** We have over 12,000 square foot of facilities that we are using. With regard to all of our test equipment, we've got simulators built to simulate actual underground operations. For example, with a continuous miner, when we repair the radio we actually operate the radio on a continuous miner simulator. We have the same thing for high-voltage underground face boxes, same thing for our scoops and roof bolters, so every piece of equipment we have to repair, we test it in an actual environment similar to underground. It's just not underground.

**Bill Reid:** *Once the equipment is built, tell us more about your simulators?*

**Larry Dye:** Ok, the testing equipment is similar to the actual conditions. If you looked at the machine we use to test remote control, it would be like looking in your electrical box on your continuous miner. We start the same size starters, same size overloads and the breakers are all the same. We have different simulators built for different equipment. We have a load bench for high current. We have 50-horsepower motors to test our SCR drives for our battery powered equipment. We have a 25-horsepower drive we use to test our VFDs. We've got different electrical test equipment plus we've got all the different electronic oscilloscopes and that type of thing also.

**Bill Reid:** *Where does most of your business come from?*

**Larry Dye:** At the present time we are doing business in all of the states that produce coal in the United States. New Mexico, Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Illinois, Kentucky, West Virginia, Virginia, Pennsylvania. Our work primarily is for other shops that rebuild large equipment. We don't try to do be a mechanical shop. We don't do mechanics. We do electronics and electrical. We do mine faults. We do gas detection equipment. We do belt conveyor equipment. Anything to do with electrical we do and we do work for primarily other shops not necessary for the end users or coal operators themselves. Now, we do a lot of the radios and that type of thing for coal operators but that's not our biggest job. Our biggest job is we actually do the big electrical boxes that go on the equipment.

**Bill Reid:** *So looking at the coal industry, there's a bit more encouragement these days with the election results. Are you seeing the uptick in the coal prices and some encouragement for the future?*

**Larry Dye:** If talk has got anything to do with business, we are going to be really busy because everyone is talking really good. The negatives after November have disappeared. Before November, all we had was negativism. In years past, we have been just building something to give high-performance and reliability. Recently, we have been asked every day to patch, repair, patch, repair, and now at last mines have started talking about what's it going to cost to get equipment back the way it should be? What's it going to cost to make it 100%? What's it going to cost to get an electrical box completely rebuilt as opposed to let's just patch it and get by for three months. Everybody in this industry knows that you can't patch forever. You've got to start buying new. You've to start doing major rebuilds and I'm getting lots of inquiries about the cost of doing that. Now we're not over the hump. We've still got to get some money back in this business, Bill. There's a lot of people got hurt, and a lot of the big companies hurt a lot of the small companies but at least we've got a light at the end of the tunnel. There's a window there. We're hoping Trump doesn't let somebody board it up. I don't think he will. I think he's going to leave it open.

**Bill Reid:** *So you're quite optimistic about the future?*

**Larry Dye:** I am very optimistic about the future, Bill. I really am. I think if somebody tries to board Trump's window up, he will make the military shoot it out and open it up bigger.

**Bill Reid:** *Well thank you very much for talking to us, Larry.*