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Tyrone Receives Safe Operator of the Year Award from New Mexico Bureau of Mine Safety

(December 3, 2020) When it comes to safely operating a haul truck, there's smooth, there's really smooth, and then there's Tyrone operations, which just won another Safe Operator of the Year award from the [New Mexico Bureau of Mine Safety](#).

Tyrone won in the Bureau's Large Mines category of its recently announced 2020 Mine Safety Awards (the period for the awards is July 1, 2019 to July 1, 2020). Tyrone also took home the award four of the previous six years.

The New Mexico Bureau of Mine Safety promotes the safety of all miners in New Mexico, and its annual awards recognize safe operators in multiple categories.

"Earning this award not once but multiple times demonstrates Tyrone's commitment to Safe Production Matters every day and every year," said **Stacy Kramer**, Vice President-Corporate Health and Safety. "The promotion of safety through these awards has contributed to a superb safety record at Tyrone as well as in New Mexico."

For **Danny Benavidez**, Mine Superintendent-Tyrone, picking an operator who represents Tyrone's prowess at safe operations is a no-brainer when you've got a haul-truck whisperer like **Julio Jimenez**, Truck Driver II.

Known to his co-workers as "Butter" for his deft touch at the controls, Jimenez has driven haul trucks and water trucks for 40 years without a single reportable incident. Not one to rest on his laurels, Jimenez recently earned the highest marks on Tyrone's Haul Truck Operator Scorecard.

"Butter is definitely one of our leaders out there," Benavidez said.

"He leads by example, but he also holds his co-workers accountable to do their job safely and always keep striving to do it better."

Tyrone has embraced a new level of communication aligned with Freeport Edge behaviors that has the potential to significantly improve the site's already excellent safety practices, said **Erich Bower**, General Manager, Tyrone.

"Our people deserve being first on the list of our priorities in the form of time spent with them in their work areas listening and responding to ideas and questions and coaching and developing," Bower said. "That



Julio "Butter" Jimenez is one haul truck operator who sets the example for safety at Tyrone operations.

is helping us keep our foot on the gas when it comes to safety, guarding against complacency on both the safety and COVID-19 fronts.”

An evolving family

Jimenez said he takes pride in working for a company that has come so far in the way it prepares and trains its new operators with haul-truck simulators, ride-alongs with experienced drivers, one-to-one coaching, mentoring and, more recently, the Haul Truck Operator Scorecard.

“I was a nervous wreck for the first few weeks, to tell you the truth, but Tyrone has always been a family where people look out for you and help each other along,” said Jimenez, of his start four decades ago.

Proving that true prowess and humility intertwine, Jimenez even blew the lid on the actual derivation of his own nickname. Spoiler alert – it’s not for being a smooth operator.

“When I was in third grade, I was skinny and fast, and they threw me the ball once in a football game and I caught it and took off running, but the ball just kind of slid out of my hands, so yeah, I was Butterfingers from then on,” Jimenez said. “After that, they kept me on defense, as far away from the ball as possible.”