

No sounds heard from miners, hopes dim

by UPI

HUNTINGTON, Utah -- A microphone lowered into the Utah mine where six miners remain trapped detected no sound, but drillers said they may have missed a cavity they aimed for. A mine safety official said it was too early to give up hope for the missing men. "While we are all disappointed by this information, spirits are still up and they (the families) have hope," Richard Stickler, head of the U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration, told reporters outside the Crandall Canyon Mine in Huntington. "There is no reason to lose hope." Late Thursday, workers bored a 2 1/2-inch hole -- wide enough to lower a microphone into the mine cavity 1,800 feet below the surface -- where the miners have not been heard from since Monday. Air samples led mine experts to theorize the communications hole may have punctured one of two old abandoned areas of the mine next to the collapse site, the Salt Lake Tribune reported. Air samples ranged from more than 20 percent, which would sustain life, to 7.5 percent, a level that would prove deadly. Drillers expected to complete a second 8 5/8-inch service hole to provide food and other supplies to the trapped men by Friday night or early Saturday morning. Other crews removing coal and rock from parallel mine shafts could reach the location of the miners in four or five days, the newspaper said.

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