



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 12, 2017

Town of Pocahontas

Contact: Benjamin Gibson

Cell: 304-887-5387

E-mail: benjamin.gibson@pocahontasva.org

Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy

Contact: Tarah Kesterson

Cell: 276-356-3405

E-mail: tarah.kesterson@dmme.virginia.gov

**Pocahontas Exhibition Mine Kicks off the Season with 140
Tazewell County 5th Graders**

Pocahontas, Va.- The Pocahontas Exhibition mine officially opens for the 2017 season today. On hand to provide safe mining demonstrations and other education on how the agency protects the environment was the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME).

“We are happy to invite our students to what we hope proves to be another record breaking season at the Pocahontas Exhibition Mine,” said Mayor Ben Gibson. “DMME is here with us for a third season and we’re grateful for their partnership in keeping our mine safe and providing valuable information to Tazewell County students”

The Pocahontas Exhibition Mine is the only of its kind in Virginia. Located in the town of Pocahontas in Tazewell County, the mine takes visitors underground to see how coal was produced in the 19th century. The 13-foot coal seam was first mined in 1882 and an operation remained there for 74 years. Pocahontas coal also once fueled the American Navy.

-MORE-

In 2015, the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME) decided to partner with the mine in an effort to preserve some of the history of coal mining in southwest Virginia.

“DMME is committed to preserve the rich history of coal mining in Virginia found at the Pocahontas Exhibition Mine,” said Deputy Director Butch Lambert. “The mine is the only of its kind in the Commonwealth and we want to secure future generations can come here to learn the importance of this mine and other coal mines across the state.”

Today’s opening ceremony included a presentation of trees from the Department of Forestry for beautification efforts in Pocahontas. DMME’s Mine Rescue Team also demonstrated their skills in a mock underground mine rescue.

Students from Abbs Valley Elementary and Graham Middle School attended the event. DMME set up different demonstrations on safety and environmental protection in coal mining, the natural gas industry and in the mineral mining industry. They also received a tour of the Pocahontas Exhibition Mine and a demonstration in electrical safety. In addition, a class from Virginia Beach visited the exhibition mine via Skype.

“DMME’s commitment to safety is the same at every mine whether is operational or a tourist attraction,” said Virginia Mine Chief Randy Moore. “We are happy to share our expertise to provide technical assistance here and to bring our folks out to help the community learn more about all the agency does across the Commonwealth.”

The Pocahontas Exhibition Mine is open April through September on Wednesdays through Sundays. Operating hours are 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday through Saturday and 12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. on Sunday. Groups that include 12 or more people can schedule a tour by calling 276-945-9522 or by sending an email to pocahontasva@comcast.net.

###