



DIVISIONS

ENERGY  
GAS AND OIL  
GEOLOGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES  
MINED LAND RECLAMATION  
MINERAL MINING  
MINES  
ADMINISTRATION

## COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

*Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy*

P. O. Drawer 900

Big Stone Gap, Virginia 24219-0900  
(276) 523-8100 FAX (276) 523-8148  
[www.dmme.virginia.gov](http://www.dmme.virginia.gov)

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

July 22, 2015

#### **Dept. of Mines, Minerals and Energy**

Contact: Tarah Kesterson

Phone: (276) 523-8146

Email: [Tarah.Kesterson@dmme.virginia.gov](mailto:Tarah.Kesterson@dmme.virginia.gov)

## **Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy to Improve Emergency Communication and Training for Virginia Miners**

**Big Stone Gap** — The Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME) will soon have the most advanced mine emergency response equipment available to be ready for Virginia miners should they find themselves in harm's way.

These efforts are being supported by a \$228,945 State Training Grant from the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), which will be used for state of the art emergency response communication equipment and improvements in training and certification for miners.

“We want to save lives,” said Mine Division Chief Randy Moore. “Having the best communication equipment in any emergency may make the difference between life and death. Our miners are invaluable and we are grateful for the MSHA grant that can improve how we serve those working in Virginia.”

The communication equipment, which will be installed in DMME's Mine Emergency Response Trailer, is designed by Innovative Wireless Technology and will synchronize with MSHA's emergency response system. It will also provide video signals from the mine site to a protected web address in order to talk to experts back at the office or to view things, such as mine maps, simultaneously. The grant will also purchase mine rescue apparatuses should DMME mine safety inspectors and trainers have to go underground when proper ventilation is compromised.

**-MORE-**

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER**  
TDD (800) 828-1120 --- Virginia Relay Center

DMME'S Small Mine Safety Service Program will also benefit from the grant. Training opportunities will be created with mobile electrical panels and new fire trailer and firefighting equipment. The Small Mine Safety Service programs serves coal mines with 50 or less employees.

Lastly, the grant will help improve training and certification testing for mineral miners in Virginia. DMME mine inspectors and trainers will now be equipped with iPads to take to mineral mining sites. Miners can take training classes, certification tests and retraining on-site.

Mineral Mining Director, Phil Skorupa, says this is an important step in customer service for Virginia's miners. "Mineral mines are located throughout the state, so it's not easy to find common ground to administer certification tests and teach classes. Having the equipment and being able to take it anywhere is a great improvement and will assure our miners have the skills they need for the job."

DMME serves 6,638 miners across the Commonwealth.

###