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## COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

### *Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy*

Washington Building, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
1100 Bank Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219-3638  
(804) 692-3200 FAX (804) 692-3237  
[www.dmme.virginia.gov](http://www.dmme.virginia.gov)

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Contact: Tarah Kesterson (276) 523-8146

Cell: (276) 356-3405

E-mail: [tarah.kesterson@dmme.virginia.gov](mailto:tarah.kesterson@dmme.virginia.gov)

## **Virginia Recognized Nationally for Safety and Reclamation in Coal Mining**

*~ Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy Awarded For Coal Miner Safety and Training ~*

**Big Stone Gap, Va.** –Virginia was recognized for exemplary safety, training and reclamation by the Interstate Mining Compact Commission (IMCC). Coal companies in the Commonwealth, as well as the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME) won four of the seven national awards.

“There is no better compliment than to have people who train miners across this country award your work,” said Virginia Mine Chief, Randy Moore of the DMME award. “The team here at DMME cares about the men and women that work on these sites and keeping them safe is personal to us. We are honored that our program sets an example.”

This is the first year the IMCC has given awards to recognize excellence in mine safety and health training programs and materials.

DMME received two awards for surface and underground training provided to coal miners. The Small Mine Safety Service, approved by the General Assembly in 1995, was included in the recognition for meeting the needs of smaller coal mines that do not have access to training and professional technical assistance.

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Also recognized for mine safety and health training was Extra Energy Inc., Virginia Point Surface Mine in Tazewell County, Virginia. The company's training program, called SMART (Safe Miners Acting Responsibly Together), is an interactive and comprehensive program that contributes to its exceptional safety records of over six years without a lost time accident. "We are honored to be recognized with the first annual IMCC Safety Award," said Health and Safety Officer Phillip Hale. "We have worked hard over the past six years establishing a safety program and a safety culture at all of our operations. The quantity of coal produced may have changed but the quality will always remain. Safety is first always."

In addition, Paramount's Hawks Nest Surface Mine in Buchanan County received the award for exemplary reclamation. "Whether it's returning the land to the original contour or developing it for beneficial public use, we have had great success in providing long term benefits to the region," said Alpha Natural Resources Vice President of Operations, Blake Hall. "Environmental stewardship is a priority within any mine plan and we pride ourselves on demonstrating how reclaimed land can bring opportunities to the region after the mining has been complete."

The coal surface mine was reclaimed to include a roadbed for the future Coalfields Expressway, a local park, a new subdivision, a habitat for elk and much more. "Hawks Nest goes above and beyond what is considered good reclamation," said DMME Mine Land Reclamation Director, Randy Casey. "We know there is good and environmentally sound work going on in Virginia and we are proud our operators are nationally recognized for their efforts."

The award winners were announced at the IMCC's meeting in Lake Placid, New York in April. DMME representatives delivered plaques to the respective sites. The IMCC is made up of 25 states that have a mining industry. The Governor Terry McAuliffe's official representative to the IMCC, DMME Deputy Director Butch Lambert, accepted the awards at the meeting.

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