



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

Washington Building, 8th Floor
1100 Bank Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219-3638
(804) 692-3200 FAX (804) 692-3237
www.dmme.virginia.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 14, 2019

Contact: Tarah Kesterson (276) 523-8146

Cell: (276)-356-3405

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

Over \$23 Million in Abandoned Mine Land Funds Spent on Improving Hurley Community

The Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy has approved \$60 million in Abandoned Mine Land projects for Buchanan County.

Big Stone Gap, Va.- Over \$23 million in abandoned mine land projects have been approved and carried out by the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME) in the Hurley community of Buchanan County. These projects have improved safety for residents, ensured clean drinking water to over 1,000 homes and improved the surrounding environment overall.

The Abandoned Mine Land program housed within DMME receives federal grant money to reclaim features left behind from coal mining that occurred before 1977. The money comes from a tax placed on currently mined coal. Over \$60 million in projects completed in Buchanan County, so far, have significantly improved safety and environmental impact from historic mining.

“Safety is our priority at DMME,” said Deputy Director Butch Lambert. “We want to ensure our neighbors are protected from historic mining and the folks in our abandoned mine land program put in a lot of effort to make sure the projects with the greatest positive effect take high priority.”

Projects completed in Buchanan County include \$3.2 million removing dangerous highwalls, \$1.3 million in restoring the health to 14 miles of stream and \$17 million in removing, stabilizing and preventing landslides. The agency has also stabilized impoundments, removed dangerous equipment and sealed historic portals so they could not be entered. In addition, \$21 million was used to replace 1,642 drinking water sources throughout the county. Included was six phases of a project bringing public water to Hurley. The agency also keeps a fund to respond to any situation deemed an emergency caused by historic mining.

Current regulations have drastically improved the impact of mining in Buchanan County and specifically in the Hurley community. Only one mine-related incident has happened in the Hurley

community since the Surface Mine Control and Reclamation Act was passed in 1977. No one was injured and, due to requirements to mine in the Commonwealth, insurance paid for damages caused by a mine blowout in January 2019.

###