



Commonwealth of Virginia
Office of Governor Ralph S. Northam

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: March 7, 2019

Office of the Governor

Contact: Alena Yarmosky

Email: Alena.Yarmosky@governor.virginia.gov

Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy

Contact: Tarah Kesterson

Email: tarah.kesterson@dmme.virginia.gov

Phone: (276) 523-8146

**Governor Northam and Congressman Griffith
Announce 10 Southwest Virginia Economic
Development Projects to Receive Pilot Grants**

~ Each project also includes reclamation of an abandoned mine land ~

RICHMOND—Governor Ralph Northam and Congressman Morgan Griffith today announced 10 economic development projects selected for grant approval from the Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Pilot program administered by the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME) and funded by the Federal Power Plus Pilot Program. The projects are located on historic mining sites and include safety and environmental improvements to the Southwest Virginia communities where they are located.

“This grant program will provide Southwest Virginia with a range of unique and valuable economic development opportunities,” **said Governor Northam**. “These projects will support important infrastructure improvements, increased tourism, and manufacturing growth in addition to bringing a first-of-its-kind solar project for the region.”

“These federal funds will assist Southwest Virginia in redeveloping and repurposing lands for new uses,” **said Congressman Griffith**. “The cleanup and new uses of the sites will create jobs, draw visitors, and enhance the quality of life. Reclamation will usher in new opportunities for our citizens and communities. I was pleased to spearhead the inclusion of Virginia in this federal program.”

Recommended projects include:

Locality	Project	Award
Wise County	<i>Appalachian Homestead</i> – a unique community offering property rights through community based sustainable farming	\$1,600,000
City of Norton	<i>Country Cabin II</i> – a music venue along the Crooked Road will make improvements to become a year-round site	\$47,420
Russell County	<i>Dante Community Redevelopment</i> – construction of a mountain bike and ATV trail	\$269,000
Buchanan County	<i>Ecotourism in Nature’s Wonderland</i> – a scenic vista to view the elk and other wildlife	\$2,254,750
Tazewell County	<i>Pocahontas Exhibition Mine</i> – enhancing the museum experience and creating a visitor tram stop for rides through the mine exhibit	\$379,178
City of Norton	<i>Project Intersection</i> – an industrial site development aimed at attracting new manufacturing businesses	\$1,782,685
Wise County	<i>Solar Value</i> – a large solar project, providing renewable energy to an industrial park tenant, the Mineral Gap Data Center	\$500,000
Dickenson County	<i>Splashdam Waterline Extension</i> – a public water expansion project will improve the quality of life for rural residents affected by historic mining	\$356,500
Russell County	<i>Project Reclaim</i> – an industrial site development aimed at recruiting new business	\$1,645,340
Wise County	<i>Enhancing the Mountain View Trail System</i> – will improve ATV trail between St. Paul and Coeburn	\$222,000

Virginia received grant dollars to develop AML sites through an amendment to the Federal Omnibus Funding Bill passed in May 2018. The amendment provided \$10 million each to Virginia, Ohio, and Alabama, in addition to funding for Kentucky, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania in the underlying bill.

“The AML Pilot projects meet the top three priorities of DMME—safety, the environment, and economic development,” **said DMME Director John Warren**. “Not only do we get safety

improvements through the reclamation of legacy mining features, we enhance an area of the state with projects that offer new opportunity across a range of economic sectors.”

The projects must still undergo a review from the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) prior to official award. DMME received \$10 million phase one funding in 2017 and worked with an advisory council to select five economic development projects.

[Full Release](#)

###