



**For Immediate Release
September 10, 2020**

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Griffith Announces Eleven Southwest Virginia Economic Development Projects to Receive Pilot Grants

*Each project also includes the reclamation of an abandoned mine
land*

Thursday, September 10, 2020 — Congressman Morgan Griffith (R-VA) announced today eleven economic development projects selected for grant approval from the 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 designed to boost the local economies of the coalfield region. Project sites are connected with historic mining activities and will deliver safety and environmental improvements to the Southwest Virginia communities where they are located.

“Reclaiming abandoned mine land is critical to economic development and job creation in Southwest Virginia,” said Griffith. “The federal AML Pilot program, which I championed in the U.S House of Representatives, offers a boost to our efforts in the coalfields to diversify the economy, support infrastructure upgrades, improve the environment and attract new opportunities. The projects benefiting from this round of funding highlight the value of abandoned mine land reclamation.”

Recommended projects include:

City of Norton	Country Cabin II- a music venue along the Crooked Road will make improvements to become a year-round site.	\$35,000
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Dickenson County	Trammel Community Revitalization- a historic coal camp that will receive infrastructure improvements	\$150,000
Russell County	Project Greenhouse- construction of a commercial greenhouse with proper infrastructure.	\$2,000,000
City of Norton	Project Intersection- an industrial site development aimed at attracting new manufacturing businesses.	\$1,417,400
City of Norton	Project Thoroughbred- a grain processing, storage and distribution terminal.	\$2,000,000
Dickenson County	Red Onion Industrial Site- a regional industrial site underway to attract new business and jobs.	\$869,854
Buchanan County	State Route 718 Utility Expansion- infrastructure development in preparation for an airport expansion.	\$1,220,016
Wise County	Russell Creek Falls Keystone Project- will develop recreational opportunities associated with a unique waterfall.	\$390,000

Lee and Buchanan Counties	Utilizing Hemp as a Remediation and Reclamation Tool-commercial growth of hemp while improving environmental effects of acid mine drainage.	\$1,500,000
Wise County	Wise County Co-Working Initiative-encouraging remote working by providing a place for those doing high-tech jobs in southwest Virginia.	\$103,000
Tazewell County	Real McCoy Cabins Expansion Project-expanding an overnight stop for ATV riders and visitors to Pocahontas in an effort to increase tourism.	\$527,361.00

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

“We were glad to see so many creative and truly beneficial project applications submitted for the 2019 funding,” **said DMME Director John Warren.** “The goals of the projects selected meet the goal of our agency to continue to find opportunities for economic development on mined land and to improve the environment for those that live in the communities affected by historic mining.”

The projects must still undergo a review from the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) prior to official award. This is third round of funding received by DMME. The agency worked with an advisory council to select the economic development projects.

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