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Project Intersection Receives \$1,782,685 for Job Creation and Reclamation of Abandoned Mine Lands

Norton, Va.- A site ranked as the top for economic development in three southwest Virginia counties will now be developed for future industry due to a grant of \$1.8 million from the Pilot Program. The Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME) received \$10 million from the U.S. Department of Treasury to help identify abandoned mine land sites that could be reclaimed to boost the economy of the southwest region of the Commonwealth.

“The Project Intersection industrial site under development by the Lonesome Pine RIFA and its partner jurisdictions promises to draw economic opportunities to the coal counties,” **said Congressman Morgan Griffith (R-VA)**. “Phase II of Project Intersection continues the work being done at the site to prepare it for industrial and business use. Support for this effort through the AML Pilot Project will help bring about new economic activities and jobs for the citizens of our region.”

This is the second Abandoned Mine Land Pilot Program grant the Lonesome Pine Regional Industrial Facilities Authority (LPRIFA) has received for this site. Phase II will include grading, road and utility development and continued work to remove a historic highwall left from coal mining that occurred before 1977. The project will turn 200 acres of an historic mine into flat, developable land that could bring in new business and jobs

“This type of economic development on former coal mined land has been the mission of DMME for decades,” **said DMME Deputy Director Butch Lambert**. “The removal of this very visible, potentially dangerous highwall in the process certainly means a much safer future for travelers on Route 23 and those that eventually come to Wise County to do business.”

Once developed, the site could host three industrial buildings. The development includes road access, water and sewer lines, electric service, natural gas access and broadband.

“The Lonesome Pine Regional Industrial Facilities Authority representing Dickenson, Lee, Scott, and Wise Counties and the City of Norton is pleased to accept this award to assist in the development of the Project Intersection initiative,” said **LPRIFA Chairman Joe Fawbush**. “Two independent studies identified this site as a primary location in Southwest Virginia for industrial development. The growth of this site will lead to the creation of employment opportunities and assist the economies within the entire Lonesome Pine Regional Industrial Facilities Authority region. The Lonesome Pine Regional Industrial Facilities Authority is a true representation of Southwest Virginia localities working together for the common good.”

Regional Industrial Facilities Authorities were established by the Virginia General Assembly for localities and counties to partner in the creation of economic development initiatives as well as share in revenues realized from these initiatives.

Project Intersection was one of 19 proposals submitted to the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME) for the 2018 grant. The agency reviewed proposals for eligibility and then took them before an advisory council made up of people involved in local economic development. The council chose ten projects to go to the Office of Surface Mining (OSM) for approval.

The Pilot Program originated in a federal omnibus bill in 2017. DMME received another \$10 million in 2019. Proposals are currently under review by the advisory council.

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