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# COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

## *Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy*

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy to create Earthquake Database to Better Prepare Virginians for Future Events**

**Charlottesville, VA-** On August 23, 2011, Virginia experienced an earthquake near Mineral that was felt by more people than any other in U.S. history. With a magnitude of 5.8, it was the most powerful earthquake ever recorded in the Commonwealth.

The Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME) was called on to respond to the event by mapping earthquake damage and coordinating the response efforts of scientists seeking to understand the event centered in Louisa County, Virginia and to monitor aftershocks.

Now, with a \$411,727 grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, DMME's geologists are creating a database that will include information about historical earthquakes and the locations of known geologic faults in seismically active parts of Virginia. This database will serve as a resource for citizens, local governments and other state agencies to access up-to-date information about the geologic features and earthquake history in their areas.

Governor Terry McAuliffe believes the information will increase awareness of possible earthquake events. "Virginia is proactive in helping residents be prepared for all emergencies. This database is another tool those of us in the Commonwealth can use to be aware of the risks and better prepare for any possible future earthquake."

The database is expected to be complete and available by September 2016. DMME, in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management, has also added an earthquake response addendum to the Virginia Emergency Operations Plan based on experiences from the 2011 event. Additional scientific research by the U.S. Geologic Survey and universities on the Louisa earthquake will be documented in a soon to be released publication titled

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“The 2011 Mineral, Virginia Earthquake and its Significance for Seismic Hazards in Eastern North America.” The volume will be published by the Geological Society of America in February 2015.

For more information on earthquakes, you can visit DMME’s website at <http://www.dmme.virginia.gov/dgmr/earthquakes.shtml>, or you can contact Matt Heller, a geologist with DMME, at 434-951-6351.

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