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**VOGA - DMME Honor Industry Excellence**  
CONSOL Energy Named Operator of the Year

Abingdon, Va.- Outstanding achievements by members of the Virginia gas and oil industry were recognized Thursday during the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy, Division of Gas and Oil and the Virginia Oil and Gas Association second annual awards program. The dinner meeting at which the awards were presented was held at the Martha Washington Inn in Abingdon.

The 2015 award for Operator of the Year went to CONSOL Energy-CNX Gas for its initiatives aimed at achieving additional gains in safety, environmental and cost performance parameters, in response to recent market downturns. In 2015, CONSOL Energy, the largest gas producer in Southwest Virginia, continued to advance its core values of safety, compliance and continuous improvement. This directly resulted in significantly improved operational performance and cost reductions, without negative impact to safety.

The 2015 award for Local Distribution Company of the Year went to Virginia Natural Gas for its commitment to safety through a variety of programs and initiatives such as Steps to Advance Virginia's Energy plan (SAVE), an infrastructure modernization program, as well as its 811 Education Program, which educates and informs fourth graders and their parents of the importance of calling 811 before starting any digging project. VNG also teamed up with Old Dominion University to promote awareness of safe digging practices; providing on-site interactive educational experiences at numerous local sporting events.

The 2015 award for Service Provider of the Year went to Western Construction, Inc. (WCI). In its affiliation as a contractor for CONSOL Energy/CNX Gas Virginia Operations, Western Construction has worked on pipeline installation. It has logged-- through April -- some 40,567 employee hours without an OSHA recordable. Further, WCI and its employees have also recorded zero lost work days and zero fatalities.

Additional awards presented were as follows:

The 2015 award for Safety/Environmental Quality went to Columbia Gas of Virginia for its sewer safety program. The program focused on the identification and remediation of cross bore conflicts with natural gas installations and sewer facilities a result of past trenchless excavation. The program raised awareness with local public works and public officials about the sewer safety program; and raised awareness and importance of the sewer safety program with all employees.

The 2015 award for Development/Innovation went to CONSOL Energy-CNX Gas for the following several projects including a new completion technique, SSI or Single Seam Isolation, which involves stimulating each coal seam individually. CONSOL also developed technology and patented the process which allows for the monitoring and control of down-hole liquid levels and re-engineered GOB wellheads, which resulted in an increase in production .

The winner of the 2015 Community Outreach award was CONSOL Energy-CNX Gas. CONSOL has maintained an active community outreach program aimed at creating awareness of the company, its role in energy production in Virginia, its impact on the communities in which it has operations and its role as a community partner. Additional community projects for which the company was recognized was for its work with VOGA and the VCEA on a 4-H Energy Quiz Bowl program to be piloted in Virginia coalfield counties; its implementation of a hotline which it used to respond to public inquiries as a result of House Bill 2058; and its involvement in pipeline safety awareness events and outreach programs.

Two partnership awards were given recognizing two 2015 partnerships.

Matney Construction was recognized for its work with CONSOL Energy to improve processes related to the installation of artificial lift systems resulting in efficiencies and cost savings in the development of natural gas resources in Southwest Virginia. Additionally, the company's work with CNX on water haulage has also resulted in savings and better resource management. With market prices as they are now, cost savings realized allow Virginia production to continue to move forward.

Virginia Natural Gas and the cities of Norfolk and Newport News were also recognized with a partnership award. Virginia Natural Gas continued its SAVE program, which authorizes natural gas utilities to expedite the modernization of its pipeline distribution system. Knowing this could create increased disruption for the community and impacted cities, Virginia Natural Gas established partnerships with the cities of Norfolk and Newport News to better coordinate the construction activities and customer communications. As result of the heightened coordination, they have realized project cost savings, reduced customer complaints and removed more than 160 miles of aged pipe from their system.

Several excellence awards were also presented and included the following:

Brent Archer received a leadership award recognizing him for his history of providing leadership in the natural gas industry across Virginia. He has provided many years of leadership with the Virginia Oil and Gas Association including serving as president while raising awareness of the oil and gas industry in Virginia. As a leader at Columbia Gas of Virginia, he has been tireless when it comes to driving legislative action in support of improving the natural gas infrastructure, providing mechanisms which support the additional use of natural gas, helping consumers use energy wisely and assisting local communities through expansion of natural gas service in support of jobs and local industry.

Jeremy Cook was recognized with an award for excellence in public safety for his exceptional dedication to sound management principles and excellence in the fire service. Cook has led the Oakwood department in fighting several forest fires that have threatened gas wells and gas

facilities in the field. In his capacity as the chief of Oakwood Fire Department, Cook has assumed the role of grant writer and has helped the department secure grants through a variety of sources. He and his department have worked side-by-side with CONSOL Energy officials, the Department of Forestry and others to extinguish fires that are potentially dangerous to the public as well as gas operations.

Ed Rothman was recognized with the excellence in education award. Rothman is the coordinator for the technical session at the Virginia Oil and Gas Association's (VOGA) annual meeting. In addition to serving as the event coordinator, Rothman is a professional geologist who has worked with several companies and committees to develop many studies in the United States. He is also an adjunct professor at West Virginia University where he teaches petroleum classes as well as fossil fuel classes to both graduate and undergraduate students.

The winner of the 2015 award for Excellence in Community Relations went to Phil Horn. Horn was recognized for his interpersonal skills, compassion and willingness to connect with the community. His talent for working with the public, his professionalism and ethics were also recognized as traits contributing to his community relations efforts.

The final award of the night presented was the leadership award given to Division of Gas and Oil Director Rick Cooper. Cooper has held the position of director since 2012. He advanced the idea of a gas industry awards program to recognize Virginia gas producers, contractors, service providers and personnel for their roles, their hard work and their exemplary safety and environmental records in producing a valuable natural resource in Virginia. Annually, Cooper attends the Virginia Oil and Gas Association meeting to update VOGA membership on industry statistics and trends, keeping all abreast of changes in the industry.

At DGO, Cooper is said to inspire employees to continuously find ways to enhance data (record keeping), providing employees with the tools and abilities to promote professional growth, allowing DGO to be completely electronic. Perhaps one of the most appreciated outcomes and at the same time, most difficult to accomplish, is that Cooper maintains a level of rapport with all companies/customers that in turn promotes an environment of cooperation and respect.

Earlier in the day, VOGA held its fall board of directors meeting. Ninth District Congressman Morgan Griffith addressed attendees at the breakfast meeting, emphasizing the importance natural gas plays in national energy security.

At the morning board meeting, new board members were welcomed and the board heard updates on a variety of topics including the current status of regulatory reviews underway and progress being made on the development of two interstate pipeline projects. Additionally, they discussed American Energy Awareness month events and planning for the Virginia Energy Challenge Creative Contest.

For additional information about VOGA, interested persons may visit [www.vaoilandgas.com](http://www.vaoilandgas.com) or [www.frackingfuels.com](http://www.frackingfuels.com).

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*Additional Photos of award winners are available upon request.*

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