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# COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Department of Mines, Minerals & Energy Helps Preserve Virginia's History**

**MIDLOTHIAN, Va.** - The Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME), in cooperation with Chesterfield County, will start work this spring on a project at Midlothian Mines Park aimed at improving the environment and the safety of park visitors while preserving an important part of Virginia's history.

To date, DMME has given \$964,620.07 in grant money for reclamation at the Midlothian Mines Park. That's the location of the only ruins in the Richmond coalfield and the oldest standing coal mining structures in the state of Virginia. The remnants come from the Grove Shaft and Murphy Slope operations. Murphy Slope ended mining on the site in 1925.

Coal mining started in the Richmond Basin over 300 years ago. The Richmond Basin was also the area to first commercially produce coal in the United States. DMME Deputy Director Butch Lambert says this is a significant project for the department. "It is important to preserve the history of coal mining and where it first began. We hope people will be able to learn more about the roots of this industry at the park for generations to come."

This is a unique project because the historical integrity, as well as public safety, has to be considered during reclamation.

Schnabel Engineering will do the reclamation that includes stabilizing the ruins of an old boiler house, replacing fencing around the ruins and mine shaft and placing a chain link material over the Grove shaft. When reclamation is complete there will be a platform that visitors can climb on and take a look down that historic shaft. Some environmental aspects due to historic mining will also be improved.

The grant will also pay for a new pedestrian bridge and a new bridge for heavier and emergency vehicles to be able to cross into the park.

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Construction on the project is set to begin in the spring. Abandoned mine land inspectors with DMME will oversee the work.

Midlothian Mines Park is a 42 acre tract of woods with trails around the historic mining structures. It is owned by Chesterfield County, and is located at 13301 N. Woolridge Rd., Midlothian, Va. 23114.

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