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GEOLOGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES
MINED LAND RECLAMATION
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COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy Accepting Proposed Pilot Funding Projects for Economic Development

Big Stone Gap, Va.- The Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME) is accepting economic development project proposals. The agency is receiving \$10 million to develop Abandoned Mine Land (AML) sites. The grant comes from the Power Plus Pilot Program which was part of the federal Omnibus Funding Bill. Projects completed with the funds will not only be designed to boost the economy of southwest Virginia's coalfields but will also improve the environment.

Proposals must meet the Office of Surface Mining (OSM) Guidance for Power Plus Pilot Program projects and submitted to DMME's Public Relations Manager, [Tarah Kesterson](mailto:tarah.kesterson@dmme.virginia.gov) by September 30, 2017. The necessary form and guidance document can be found on the DMME [website](http://www.dmme.virginia.gov). Anyone may submit a proposal as long as it meets OSM guidance requirements.

All proposals will be reviewed by the advisory group. The group will also choose projects to submit to the Office of Surface Mining for approval. Members of the advisory group include Duane Miller, Executive Director of the LENOWISCO Planning District; Jim Baldwin, Executive Director of the Cumberland Plateau Planning District; Jonathan Belcher, Executive Director for the Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority (VCEDA); Michelle Jenkins, District Director for Congressman Morgan Griffith's Office; Butch Lambert, Deputy Director for DMME and John Warren, Director for DMME.

An AML inventory is currently available via the DMME [website](http://www.dmme.virginia.gov) and lists features for each site.

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The Abandoned Mine Land program was created after more thorough environmental laws were passed through the Surface Mining and Control Act in 1977. The program is charged with reclaiming sites that were mined before those laws were in place and that could be a hazard to the public and the environment.

DMME prioritizes those projects based on the severity and whether another entity is available to reclaim the site. The \$10 million will allow the agency to reclaim projects that may not have taken precedence before. The reclamation of these projects will have a focus of improving the economy of southwest Virginia with the added benefit of improving the environment.

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