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## **Ten Companies Recognized for Excellence in Coal Mining and Reclamation in Virginia**

**Lebanon, Va.-** Ten Virginia companies were recognized for excellence in coal mining and reclamation in the Commonwealth. All proved to be environmental stewards in the coal industry.

The companies were presented awards by the Virginia Coal and Energy Alliance (VCEA) and the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME) at the 45<sup>th</sup> annual fall meeting held at the Russell County Conference Center in Lebanon, Virginia on November 28<sup>th</sup>. VCEA Chairman Jeff Taylor, Virginia Delegate Will Morefield, DMME Deputy Director Butch Lambert, Mined Land Reclamation Director Randy Casey and Virginia Mine Chief Randy Moore presented the awards.

**Best Innovation in Mining and Reclamation: GOBCO, LLC, Hurricane Fork Gob Pile, Russell County.** In reclaiming the Hurricane Fork Gob Pile, GOBCO, LLC incorporated natural stream restoration techniques on 1,800 feet of Hurricane Fork. Efforts such as this have led to restoring Dumps Creek back to health. A Boy Scout placed bird houses and bat boxes over the entire project area for his Eagle Scout project.

**15 Year Legacy Award: Motivation Coal Company, Russell County.** This mining operation was a remining operation—retrieving coal left behind when the original mine closed before 1977. Nearly all of the highwalls left behind from the historic mining were removed. The majority of the site was reclaimed for a diverse and thriving land use of unmanaged forest, gas wells and lines were installed and a permanent impoundment or dam was kept for fishing and recreation.

**Best AML Enhancement: GOBCO, LLC, Hurricane Fork Gob Pile, Russell County.** GOBCO wins this award for the fourth year in a row. GOBCO is a major fuel supplier for Dominion’s Virginia City Hybrid Energy Center (VCHEC). Through the abandoned mine land enhancement project, GOBCO recovers waste coal from the gob pile, sells it to VCHEC for fuel and uses proceeds from the coal sales to offset the cost of the reclamation. Hurricane Fork Gob Pile was the single worst AML impact to water quality in the Clinch River watershed.

**Best Completed Deep Mine: Red River Coal Co., Inc, Wise County.** The Race 2 underground mine was an operation in the Taggart seam on Red River Coal Company Inc.. The company properly reclaimed the underground mine and completed all backfilling, grading and seeding the area.

**Best Completed Surface Mine: Paramount Coal Company, Virginia LLC.** The post-mining land use on this site is a good example of unmanaged forest land use. This site has also been nominated for Office of Surface Mining and National Association of State Land Reclamationists (NASLR) awards. This permit won the 2016 NASLR award for coal reclamation. The operator has done excellent work in regrading highwalls to meet the approximate original contour.

**Best Active Surface Mine: Ridgetop Development, LLC, Wise County.** This is a surface mine that covers over 74 acres in which three coal seams are mined. The permit was issued from DMME in April 2014 and currently the company is working to add over 93 acres for additional mining. Ridgetop Development is conducting an excellent surface mining operation in returning the mined area to approximate original contour. All reclamation is being kept current. The post mining land use is

undeveloped and unmanaged forest. Clay material has been removed from the site on occasion. It has been used for construction and maintenance purposes at the adjacent Wise County Landfill.

**Best Post-Mining Land Use: Clintwood Elkhorn Mining LLC., Buchanan County.**

This site has excellent ground cover and good success rate for the planted trees. According to Dale Dotson of Clintwood Elkhorn Mining, approximately 200 fruit trees were planted on the reclaimed coal mining site. The variety of fruit trees include: Semi Dwarf Yellow Apple, Semi Dwarf Vivid Peach, Semi Dwarf Bartlet Pear, Semi Dwarf Burbank Plum, Semi Dwarf Royal Plum, Semi Dwarf Early Elberta Peach. The company also established a Honey Bee plot on the permit.

**Best Combination Mining: Lone Mountain Processing, Inc., Lee County.**

For the fourth year in a row, Lone Mountain Processing was recognized for its processing operation and refuse disposal site. This site is well maintained and in full compliance with all environmental and reclamation requirements.

**Best Active Deep Mine: Buchanan Minerals, LLC Buchanan County.**

This large and complex underground mine has an outstanding compliance record and has invested millions of dollars to protect the environment.

**Best Completed Fill: Island Creek Coal Company, Buchanan County.**

Island Creek constructed and reclaimed this refuse fill in accordance with all requirements. The reclaimed refuse facility is extremely well vegetated

**Best Stewardship in Mining and Reclamation: Dominion and its Virginia City Hybrid Energy Center, Wise County.**

Dominion purchases fuel from responsible sources where environmental protection and reclamation are fully incorporated into operations. Implementing the design plan for VCHEC, a significant percentage of its fuel is from gob piles. This accomplishes the complete removal of environmentally degrading gob piles at little cost to state agencies. VCHEC maintains an exemplary compliance record with all environmental regulations. Dominion is a strong supporter of local and regional environmental events and especially of Arbor Day events that promote reforestation of mined lands.

