



U.S. Office of Surface Mining

News Release



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For immediate release

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Montana Awarded \$1 million to regulate coal mine reclamation

OSM funds programs to protect people and environment during coal mining

(WASHINGTON) – Interior Secretary Gale Norton today announced that the Interior Department's Office of Surface Mining has awarded Montana \$1,000,822 as initial funding for the state's FY2004 Administration and Enforcement grant.

“This grant, combined with state matching funds, will support Montana's program to inspect active coal mines and enforce Surface Mining Act requirements to protect people and the environment during mining and ensure prompt land restoration afterward,” said Norton.

The Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977, the law that regulates coal mining throughout the country, established a coordinated effort between the states and the federal government to prevent abuses that characterized surface coal mining in the past. The Law gives states authority to regulate active coal mining and also fund reclamation of abandoned mine problems.

The OSM grant, together with state matching funds, will cover costs of salary and fringe benefits for 17 Montana employees involved in the regulation of active coal mines. Montana has 17 active units to inspect and annual coal production of 37 million tons.

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Information about coal mine reclamation and photos are available at www.osmre.gov