



News Release

US Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM)



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OSM Director Praises Kentucky's Award Winning System

Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM) Director Brent Wahlquist today praised the Kentucky Mine Mapping Information System for winning the Best of Kentucky technology award for Best Online Service.

“It is truly impressive how this dedicated team combined cutting edge technology with know-how and vision to create a best-of-the-best solution in an area vital to public safety,” Wahlquist said. “Providing easily accessible information concerning underground mines improves public safety, protects the environment, improves economic development and more.”

This system plays a vital public safety role by providing an electronic repository for maps of the hundreds of abandoned and active underground mines that burrow under the state.

Emphasizing the importance of this website is the fact that underground mining has occurred in Kentucky for over 150 years. In that time, many of the maps and mine locations have been lost or forgotten.

The mines pose a hazard in a number of ways. Sometimes mines subside, where the ground above sinks down into mined out areas below the surface. This can have a catastrophic affect on buildings, roads and other structures above the mine. Modern mines, and their structures, can be jeopardized when they run too close – or even breach – a mine that is forgotten or for which the maps are incomplete or inaccurate.

“OSM has long recognized that the Kentucky Mine Mapping Information System was a premier site,” Wahlquist said.

OSM works with Kentucky and other states building such repositories by providing technology transfer, funding grants and technical expertise as needed. OSM’s National Mine Map Repository provides a national index of all mine map repository as well as providing critical backup capabilities for State efforts. Still, Wahlquist stresses that this win is a reflection of the drive and ingenuity of dedicated individuals.

“This is a wonderful example of the beauty of the Surface Mining Act’s vision of “primacy” - we provide some seed money and technical support, but it is the vision and expertise of local officials and citizenry that builds a system that meets the needs of the local community.” He said.

The award was given in the Best Online Services category and announced at the Kentucky Digital Government Summit.

You can get more information and visit the Kentucky Mine Mapping Information System at <http://minemaps.ky.gov/>.