



Surface Coal Mining Reclamation Awards

History and objectives of the program

The awards program is designed so that state and federal regulators can transfer outstanding reclamation methods and techniques to the coal mine operators who work under the Surface Mining Law nationwide. The winners are the coal mine operators who developed innovative reclamation techniques or who have completed reclamation that resulted in outstanding on-the-ground performance. Today active, producing mines are being turned into farmland and parks, housing sites and habitat.

Nominations for an Award

Nominations may be submitted by coal companies, regulatory authorities, state or federal mine inspectors, interest groups, or landowners. Company officials and employees may nominate their own operations.

National Awards. These annual awards are presented to coal mining companies for achieving the most exemplary mining and reclamation in the country. A coal mining operation may be nominated for achievement in a specific portion of the reclamation (e.g., design and implementation of sedimentation control practices) or for overall performance in meeting goals of the Surface Mining Law. All nominations should include on-the-ground results for however long the results have been in place. For example, a nomination for increased soil productivity on a reclaimed site would be verified with several years of crop yield data.

Director's Award. Each year one coal mining operation in the country is selected to receive the Director's Award for outstanding achievement in a specific area of reclamation. The Director's Award for 2008 will be presented for reforestation.

Good Neighbor Awards. Three mine operations will be selected to receive Good Neighbor Awards for successfully working with the surrounding land owners and the community while completing mining and reclamation. Nominations for this category should briefly describe the mining and reclamation operation (both narrative and photos), and include testimonial letters and/or other documentation of a successful good neighbor policy.

Best-of-the-Best Award. One operation may be selected from this year's National Award winners as the Best-of-the-Best. This special award will recognize and be presented to the specific individual(s) -- mine manager, reclamation specialist, state inspector -- who were directly responsible for the most outstanding accomplishments.



Nominations Due March 15, 2008

For questions regarding nominations
or the award program contact:

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2008

*Excellence in
Surface Coal Mining*

Reclamation Awards



Call for nominations

*US Department of the Interior
Office of Surface Mining*



Who is eligible for an award?

Surface coal mining and reclamation operations that have been conducted under a Title V permit (1978 - present) may be nominated for an award. In addition, non-permitted mining and reclamation completed using Government Financial Reclamation Contracts under the Enhanced Abandoned Mine Land regulations is also eligible for nomination.

Although Title IV Abandoned Mine Land reclamation projects are not included in this program, this aspect of reclamation is eligible for a National or Director's Award if it is integrated with Title V permitted operations.

Director's Award

The Director's Award for 2008 will be presented for reforestation.

Rules and required information.

Nominations should be submitted to the state regulatory authority, or in states without this authority (Tennessee, and Washington), to the local Office of Surface Mining field office. Nomination packages **must** be developed using the following format:

A. Cover sheet containing:

1. Company name.
2. Name and location of the nominated mining operation (including driving directions).
3. Permit number(s) of site being nominated.
4. Award category (the same nomination may be submitted in the Director's Award, Good Neighbor Award, and National Award categories).
5. Name, address, phone number, and E-mail address of a company contact person (and of the person submitting the nomination if different).
6. Names and titles of all individuals directly responsible for on-the-ground reclamation at the nominated site.

B. Narrative description of the specific reclamation or environmental control techniques that resulted in exemplary performance under the Surface Mining Law. The narrative should be comprehensive, but not exceed six single-spaced typewritten pages and should describe the mining operation and the specific activity nominated for an award using the following outline:

1. Brief history/background of the mining and reclamation.
2. Description of the nominated activity or reclamation practice, including specific problems, solutions, and unusual circumstances.
3. On-site effectiveness of the work. This should be documented and quantified with data. For example, successful handling of acid materials could be shown with water quality sampling data.
4. Transferability or value of the accomplishment(s) to other mining and reclamation operations.
5. Long-term benefits to the landowner and local or regional community.

C. Color photographs (not slides)

The photos should show both the specific activity and the surrounding reclamation. Photographs should be 8" x 10" or smaller, and labeled to explain what the photo shows. "Before and after" photos are desirable, but not required. Winning entries will be asked to provide digital tape and a CD of 640 X 480 jpegs.

D. Format

Each nomination package must contain the required information in a three-ring, loose-leaf binder, plus five high-quality, stapled copies. Additional supporting information may be submitted with the nomination; however, it must be separate from the information described above. *Nominations judged at the national level will not be returned.*

Selection of the 2008 award-winning operations

Nominations are due to the state regulatory authorities or the Office of Surface Mining field office in non-primacy states March, 15 2008. Nominations will be screened by the regulatory authority, and the best entries (a maximum of four National Awards, one Director's Award, and two Good Neighbor Awards from each state) forwarded to the Office of Surface Mining field offices by March 30, 2008. Field offices will evaluate and forward the nominations to the Office of Surface Mining Headquarters in Washington, D.C. by April 30, 2008, for judging on May 15, 2008.

Selection of winners consists of several steps.

A site visit by a field office representative is made to ensure that:

1. On-the-ground performance conforms with the permit and is exemplary within that state or geographic area;
2. information in the nomination accurately reflects current site conditions;
3. other mining activities at the site do not detract from the award-winning activity; and
4. each nominee's Surface Mining Law compliance record is examined to ensure that there are no outstanding violations and to determine that there is no past record of not abating violations.

A panel of judges, composed of representatives of the Office of Surface Mining evaluate the nominations and select the National, Director's and Good Neighbor Award winners.

