

News Release



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Contact: Amy Louviere Matthew Faraci
Phone: 202-693-9423 202-693-9406

MSHA collects more than \$225,000 in overdue fines *Agency warns three mine operators who failed to pay civil penalties*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Department of Labor’s Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) announced its recent success in collecting more than \$225,000 in overdue fines from three coal mine operators. Andalex Resources Inc., a subsidiary of Murray Energy Corp., had failed to pay more than \$70,000 in civil penalties for health and safety violations for its Aberdeen Mine in Carbon County, Utah. Left Fork Mining Co. Inc.’s Straight Creek #1 Mine in Bell County, Ky., owed more than \$71,000, and Leeco Inc.’s Number 68 Mine in Perry County, Ky., owed more than \$86,000.

“When mine operators do not pay civil penalties, they have a reduced incentive to prevent and remedy the hazards that face the men and women who work in their mines,” said Richard E. Stickler, acting assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health. “We will work diligently to identify mine operators who fail to comply with their duty to pay civil penalties, and we will take all necessary actions to ensure they do so.”

In May, the Department of Labor’s Office of the Solicitor, on behalf of MSHA, sent demand letters to the three mine operators who had significant levels of delinquent debt based on their failure to pay civil penalties accrued within the past 18 months. In each case, the civil penalties had long become final orders under Section 105(a) of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977 (Mine Act).

MSHA informed the mine operators that failure to pay these civil penalties would result in further action. Under Section 104(a) of the Mine Act, if the operators fail to pay the civil penalties, MSHA can impose additional daily civil penalties and/or issue mine closure orders.

In early June, Andalex paid off its overdue fines and Leeco paid its overdue fines in July. Left Fork also paid its overdue fines but requested that the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission also reopen its cases. The commission has not yet ruled on Left Fork’s request. By coming into compliance, all three mine operators avoided further sanctions.

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