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Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement to Honor Winners of 2011 Awards for Exemplary Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation

(Washington, D.C.) – [The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement](#) (OSM) will recognize the winners of the bureau's awards for exceptional reclamation of abandoned mines next week.

Abandoned Mine Land (AML) programs in Iowa, Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Wyoming will receive OSM's 2011 AML Reclamation Awards, which for the past 20 years have recognized outstanding abandoned mine land reclamation projects and showcased exemplary reclamation techniques.

AML projects funded wholly or in part and completed by approved state or tribal programs are eligible for the awards, which cover coal, non-coal, and emergency reclamation projects. A panel of judges, composed of directors of state reclamation programs and OSM managers, voted to determine the winners.

On October 10, OSM will honor the five award winners at an event during the [National Association of Abandoned Mine Land Program's annual conference](#), which takes place in Olympic Valley, CA, October 9-12. OSM will give awards for the best project in each of OSM's Appalachian, Mid-Continent and Western Regions; the Small Project Award, given to the project achieving the best reclamation for a cost of less than \$1 million; and the National Award, given for the best project nationwide.

The winning projects are:

- **Kempton Refuse and AMD/AML Project, Tucker County, West Virginia**
The Appalachian Regional Award-winning project addressed the hazards from more than 100 years of underground and surface mining. The project sealed two underground mine portals, eliminated two dangerous waste impoundments, and cleared more than 2,500 feet of decaying highwalls, all of which were allowing acidic water to enter tributaries to the North Branch Potomac River.
- **Westercamp AML Reclamation Project, Mahaska County, Iowa**
The Mid-Continent Regional Award is for a project that lies about a mile from the town of Beacon, Iowa, and covers about 55 acres. The project involved the clean-up of an underground coal mine, which included 13 polluted ponds filled with



acidic water, 10 acres of industrial and residential waste (which included abandoned cars and trucks), and 26,000 feet of dangerous highwalls.

- **Kleenburn Coal Mine AML Site, Sheridan County, Wyoming**
The Western Regional Award-winning project addressed hazards from WWII-era underground and surface mining. Years of unrestricted use by the public had also led to the site's deterioration. The project cleaned up two strip-mined pits, large piles of mine spoil, and fire hazards, and created 16 acres of usable park land for public fishing, boating, bird watching and picnicking.
- **Thomas Acid Mine Drainage Reclamation Project, Carroll County, Ohio**
The Small Project Award winner, which was 10 years in the planning phase, cleaned up acid mine drainage from underground coal and clay mining. For nearly a century, pollution at the project site was being discharged from a series of pits, deep mine leaks, and mine spoil. Project proponents returned the land to habitat for fish and wildlife.
- **Newport North Project, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania**
The National Award winner is given to the project judged to be the best in the country. The Newport North project targeted an abandoned area that led to the deaths of six people in six years, all in one small half-acre mine pit. The combined efforts of State government, private property owners, and a citizens' group, enabled the project to reclaim 36 acres, backfill several strip pits, eliminate 3,000 feet of dangerous highwall, and return the site to its approximate original contour. Project coordinators also held a public event to raise awareness of the dangers posed by abandoned mine lands.

For instant updates on OSM, and more on the bureau's reclamation awards, follow OSM on Twitter at www.twitter.com/OSMRE or visit the OSM home page at www.osmre.gov.

The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement carries out the requirements of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 in cooperation with states and tribes. OSM's objectives are to ensure that coal mining activities are conducted in a manner that protects citizens and the environment during mining, to ensure that the land is restored to beneficial use after mining, and to mitigate the effects of past mining by aggressively pursuing reclamation of abandoned coal mines.

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