

# 2004 EXCELLENCE IN SURFACE COAL MINING RECLAMATION AWARDS

## CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

United States Department of the Interior  
Office of Surface Mining



**UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**  
OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

**OFFICIAL BUSINESS**

PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, \$300

## History and objectives of the program

Since passage of the Surface Mining Law in 1977, land reclamation in the United States has become a built-in component of surface coal mining. In fact, successfully reclaimed land quickly begins to resemble its natural condition and is difficult to distinguish from the surrounding landscape.

The Interior Department's Office of Surface Mining (OSM) initiated its annual Excellence in Surface Coal Mining Reclamation Awards in 1986 to make visible the accomplishments of those responsible for the nation's most outstanding achievements in environmentally-sound surface mining and land reclamation, and to highlight the experience gained from completing exemplary reclamation.

The awards program is designed so that state and federal regulators can transfer the 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.

*This year four types of awards will be presented:*

**National Awards.** These annual awards are presented to coal mining companies for achieving the most exemplary mining and reclamation in the country. The awards recognize on-the-ground achievement of the Surface Mining Law.

**Director's Award.** One coal mining operation in the country is selected to receive the Director's Award for outstanding achievement in a specific area of reclamation. This year the award will recognize a mine operator whose dedication and commitment has included reclamation of Abandoned Mine Land problems as part of the active mining and reclamation operation.

**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. A bronze, silver, and gold award will be presented in this category.

**Best-of-the-Best Award.** One operation will 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.

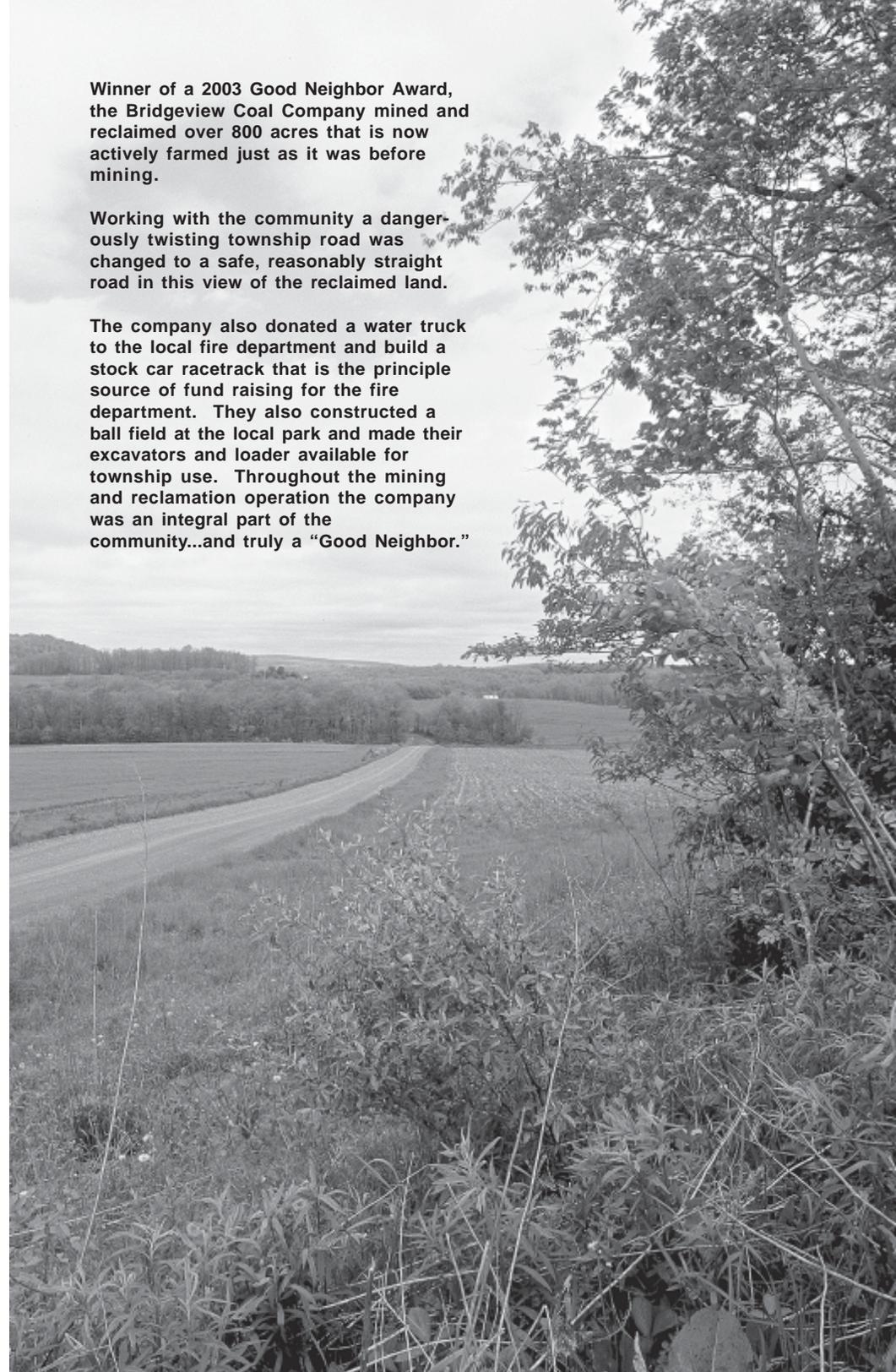
The Office of Surface Mining initiates the annual award process by requesting nominations from coal mine operators and others knowledgeable about the industry. Each state regulatory authority selects the best nominations for judging at the national level for the Office of Surface Mining's annual awards

**COVER PHOTO:** The Drummond Company Cedrum No. 4 Mine, located in Townley, Alabama completed extensive mitigation of premining natural areas by constructing wetlands. The reclaimed mine land now provides a diverse plant and animal community and a pastoral Alabama landscape.

**Winner of a 2003 Good Neighbor Award, the Bridgeview Coal Company mined and reclaimed over 800 acres that is now actively farmed just as it was before mining.**

**Working with the community a dangerously twisting township road was changed to a safe, reasonably straight road in this view of the reclaimed land.**

**The company also donated a water truck to the local fire department and build a stock car racetrack that is the principle source of fund raising for the fire department. They also constructed a ball field at the local park and made their excavators and loader available for township use. Throughout the mining and reclamation operation the company was an integral part of the community...and truly a "Good Neighbor."**



## Selection of the 2004 award-winning operations.

Nominations are due to the state regulatory authorities or the Office of Surface Mining field office in non-primacy states February 2, 2004. 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 February 20, 2004. Field offices will evaluate and forward the nominations to the Office of Surface Mining Headquarters in Washington, D.C. by March 18, 2004, for judging on March 23, 2004.

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. Scoring is based on the following criteria:

| Criteria  | Maximum Points |
|---|----------------|
| Clarity and completeness of nomination package                | 5              |
| Difficulty of achieving reclamation under existing conditions | 20             |
| On-site effectiveness   | 30             |
| Transferability of the technique or practice                  | 12             |
| Increased public awareness of the Surface Mining Law          | 8              |
| Long-term benefits to the community                           | 15             |
| Exceeds the spirit and intent of the Surface Mining Law       | 10             |

Judges' scores are totaled, and winning nominations selected. Based upon the judges' decision, the number of National Awards may vary from year to year. Awards are not limited to one per state. The Best-of-the-Best winner will be selected after visiting each of the National winners and discussing on-the-ground results with reclamation specialist(s) responsible for the work. Announcement of the 2004 award winners and presentation of awards will be made during a 2004 National Mining Association meeting.

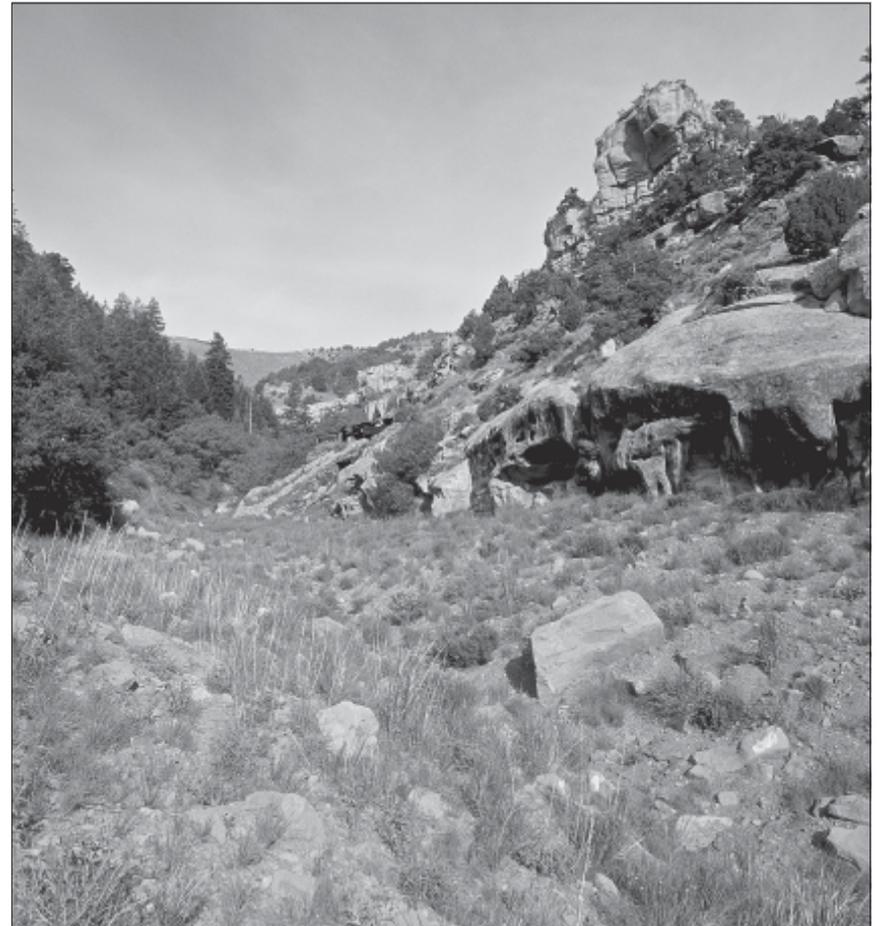
Address questions regarding nominations or the award program to the Office of Surface Mining field offices or Chuck Meyers, Office of Surface Mining, Washington, D.C. 20240. Telephone (202)208-7940; E-mail (cmeyers@osmre.gov).

Electronic copies of this flyer in Adobe Acrobat .pdf format and a list of (1986-present) winners are also available on the Office of Surface Mining web site at ([www.osmre.gov/awards.htm](http://www.osmre.gov/awards.htm)).

## 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. The operation's exemplary performance may be achieved during active mining, during reclamation, following bond release, or throughout the entire process.

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.



In this steep, mountainous Utah canyon underground coal mining started in the 1880's and before reclamation, the site contained buildings and coal refuse piles. The entire area was covered with soil and planted with native grasses, forbs, and shrubs. Today, it's a magnificent, picturesque mountain canyon without any trace of coal mining.

## How to nominate a surface coal mining operation for an award.

Nominating a surface coal mining operation for an Office of Surface Mining Award is the first step in the award selection process. Nominations may be submitted by coal companies, regulatory authorities, coal associations, public interest groups, or landowners. Company officials and employees may nominate their own operations.

### **National Awards.**

A surface coal mining operation may be nominated for outstanding achievement in a specific portion of the reclamation (e.g., design and implementation of innovative sedimentation control practices) or for exceptional overall performance in meeting goals of the Surface Mining Law. National awards are presented for development of innovative techniques that would have widespread application to other areas and for outstanding on-the-ground reclamation using traditional reclamation methods.

There are two broad award categories for the National Awards.

1. Ongoing mining or reclamation that has achieved excellent results but is unproven because not enough time has passed to verify the long-term effectiveness of the results. This category allows active mining and reclamation methods that show great promise to be eligible for recognition. Nominations in this category should include on-the-ground results for however long the results have been in place.
2. Reclamation that has achieved bond release, or in cases where enough time has passed to verify the long-term success of the work. Nominations submitted in this category must contain information and/or data that verifies the results. 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**

The Director's Award for 2004 will be presented for exemplary reclamation that includes elimination of Abandoned Mine Land problems. The nomination should include a description of the reclamation and specific information about the extent of the Abandoned Mine problems and methods used to reclaim the site. To be eligible for this award, the abandoned mine land does not have to be on the permit area and may be adjacent to the reclaimed mine site. However, it must be an integral part of the active mining reclamation.

### **Good Neighbor Awards**

Three awards will be presented for achievement of exemplary interaction, communication, and involvement with the surrounding land owners and local community. Establishment of good working relations and interaction with mine neighbors is an important element of the Surface Mining Law that mine operators are achieving in many different ways. The objective of these awards is to recognize this achievement and communicate the Good Neighbor concepts so others can use them. This may include successful interaction with landowners throughout the mining and reclamation process, working with local organizations to better inform citizens, or including the community in on-the-ground reclamation activities. 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.

## Rules and required information.

Nominations should be submitted to the state regulatory authority, or in states without this authority (Missouri, 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 one of the two National Award categories).
5. Name, address, phone number, (and E-mail address if available) 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. When examined with the narrative description, the photographs should provide a clear understanding of the exemplary accomplishments. 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. There is no limit to the number of photographs that may be submitted.

**D. Format.** Each nomination package must contain the required information (described above) in a three-ring, loose-leaf binder, plus five high-quality, stapled machine copies (e.g., Xerox) for use by the judges. 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.