



U.S. Office of Surface Mining **News Release**



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Active Mine Operations Recognized for Outstanding Reclamation

Editor's note: Mines are located in IL, IN, TX, WV, and WY

(Las Vegas, NV) Eight coal mine operations in five states gained top honors in the annual competition overseen by the US Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM).

The coal mining companies and their employees were recognized at an awards luncheon hosted by the National Mining Association.

"These awards recognize the highest achievements in innovative techniques, reforestation, preparing mined land for long term agricultural use and building enduring community infrastructure" OSM Director Brent Wahlquist said. "All of the entries demonstrated a commitment to the environment and the coal field community," he continued "which is especially important as nearly half of our electricity comes from coal.

Mine operations receiving awards in 2008 are:

Directors Award – For Reforestation

**Luminant Mining - Big Brown Mine, Martin Lake Mine, Monticello Mine,
Oak Hill Mine, Thermo Mine -Texas**

These mines show how sound science and dedication to stewardship can produce useful land for commercial forestry, food supply for wild life, and actually add to wetlands. In 2007 alone they planted 1,637,825 trees, including 32 species, 16 of which are hard mast producers for wildlife.

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National Awards for Excellence in Surface Mining

International Coal Company, ICG Eastern, Birch River Complex - West Virginia

ICG has pioneered development of bench refuse disposal, avoiding hollow fill impoundments and using materials handling methods that prevent acid mine discharges. Careful use of innovative practices' analyzed and evaluated in partnership with West Virginia University are used here, resulting in exemplary post mining water quality, soil suitable to support 750,000 trees, vegetation and forage for a wide variety of wildlife, a task complicated by re-mining a pre-law mined site.

Rio Tinto Energy America, Jacobs Ranch Mine - Wyoming

Above and beyond regulatory requirements, this company uses sound science to establish and maintain a high level of forage for area ranches, deer, and antelope while recreating ephemeral streams and building natural reservoirs supporting cattle and wildlife. The rigorous environmental standards Rio Tinto requires cover air and water quality, water quantity, mineral and non mineral waste management, hazardous material and contamination control, land use stewardship, and environmental management systems.

Peabody Energy, Black Beauty Coal Company, Miller Creek Mine, Sugar Ridge Pit Indiana

Careful soil analysis and handling, close cooperation with Mid-Western Universities and soil fertility management planning have turned this mined land into prime farmland with high yields. When soils are returned to the mined land, they are layered and lightly compacted enabling high yields. Water impoundments as large as 26 acres on the permit area enhance farming land uses and are stocked with fish. This is exemplary reclamation supporting corn, soybeans, wheat and alfalfa and is also deserving of special mention for involving the community in planning for enduring use of agricultural land.

Massey Energy, Road Fork Development, Superior Surface Mines - West Virginia

As an integral part of the mine plan at an area with 50 acres of prelaw mined land, Superior Surface mines took an approach that would strengthen a prelaw slurry pond, one of the largest and oldest in the world. Their innovative and practical approach demonstrates that good engineering and a commitment to the environment can go together with efficient mining. Where once refuse material had caught fire and seepage occurred at the pond toe, Superior's efforts have buttressed the pond walls with alkaline material ensuring safety and environmental protection for the heavily populated Main Island Creek Watershed.

Good Neighbor Awards

The Good Neighbor Awards were established by OSM to recognize the most exemplary efforts in establishing good working relations with coal field communities.

The Bronze Good Neighbor Award

Arch Coal, Thunder Basin Coal Company, LLC, Black Thunder Mine - Wyoming

Well known for its high levels of reclamation for ranching and wildlife, along with community involvement, Arch Coal's Black Thunder Mine has developed an unusual program, ensuring that raptors thrive along with other wildlife while mining and reclamation go on. Partnered with national and international wildlife and ecological associations, as well as the U.S. Forest Service, this company goes beyond habitat conservation adding to our body of knowledge of raptor migration patterns and involves area students in the practical scientific work of ground observation.

The Silver Good Neighbor Award

Rio Tinto Energy America, Antelope Mine, Cordero Rojo Mine, Jacobs Ranch Mine, Wyoming

Rio Tinto's strong commitment to environmental excellence and reclamation includes developing self sustaining projects appropriate to area economies and goes well beyond the company's strong financial support for community projects. Assessing community needs during mining and looking to the future after mining and reclamation are complete; Rio Tinto contributes time and expertise to advisory boards, planning teams and active involvement in ecosystem and wildlife education and preservation merging their efforts with local schools. They are heavily involved with organizations to guide young people to productive lives.

The Gold Good Neighbor Award

Arch Coal, Coal-Mac INC., West Virginia

This award honors the company's involvement in the community with special emphasis on its educational efforts. From kindergarten through high school and into college, the personal involvement of managers, executives, and employees is both extensive and exemplary. Mining and reclamation are demonstrated and explained as educational excellence and effort are encouraged. Baseball fields have been built, cultural and recreation activities are encouraged as is the study of local and regional history.