

# OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING RECLAMATION AND ENFORCEMENT

## CUSTOMER SERVICE REPORT

*"A STATUS REPORT TO 'YOU', OUR CUSTOMER"*

SEPTEMBER 1995

U.S. Department of the Interior

The purpose of this status report to you, the customer, is the Office of Surface Mining's (OSM) continual effort to identify its customers, their ideas, needs, and opinions, and the Agency's effort for continuous improvement. This report contains two parts:

Part 1 provides background on OSM's strategic planning, which identifies its mission, goals and customer performance standards. OSM developed its customer performance standards in 1994, and this Part will tell you how we did in satisfying those standards.

Part 2 is a summary report of a customer survey that OSM conducted in late summer of 1995. The purpose of the survey questionnaire was to further identify OSM's customer base and its perceptions and needs. The survey was designed to help OSM improve its products and services and to identify its customers more precisely. The survey provided us the following summary information:

- How information is disseminated to you about OSM's products and services
- Products and service delivery
- Quality of service
- Suggestions for improvement

The Office of Surface Mining does rely on you and values your opinions and suggestions for continual improvement of the Agency. Please do not hesitate to contact us with your suggestions.

## PART 1

### OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING RECLAMATION AND ENFORCEMENT (OSM)

#### MISSION

Our mission is to carry out the requirements of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA/the Act) in cooperation with States and Tribes. Our primary objectives are to ensure that coal mines are operated in a manner that protects citizens and the environment during mining and assures that the land is restored to beneficial use following mining, and to mitigate the effects of past mining by aggressively pursuing reclamation of abandoned coal mines.

#### VISION

In regulating active coal mining, we will maintain compliance at high levels and ensure that all mines are properly operated and promptly reclaimed to the standards established under the Act. We will emphasize prevention and ensure that long-term environmental problems do not occur. We will ensure that the premining productivity of the land is restored.

In reclaiming abandoned mine lands, we will aggressively pursue reclamation with a primary emphasis on correcting the most serious problems related to public health, safety, and the general welfare. We will ensure maximum public benefit through the prompt and fair distribution of public funds.

In cooperating with State regulatory authorities, the primary enforcers of SMCRA, and with Tribes, we will promote a shared commitment to the goals of the Act. We will develop comprehensive understandings about the fairness, effectiveness, and efficiency of SMCRA programs. We will provide constructive program reviews, oversight monitoring, and technical assistance that focus on results. We will act independently to protect the public interest in situations of imminent harm or when a State does not implement an approved regulatory program.

In dealing with those who are affected by mining and reclamation, we will ensure that protection of citizens from abusive mining practices, be responsive to their concerns, and allow them full access to information needed to evaluate the effect of mining on their health, safety, general welfare, and property.

In our relations with the coal industry, we will have clear fair and consistently applied policies and will respect the importance of coal production as a source of our Nation's energy supply.

In all communications, we will, maintain open, courteous, constructive, and timely dialogue and will use information to understand and improve our programs and those of our State and Tribal partners.

In demonstrating leadership in mining and reclamation, we will promote the development of the highest quality technical information and research and will seek the transfer of technology to those who would benefit.

In meeting our responsibilities, we will be a diverse, competent, innovative, and highly trained work force. We will serve with integrity and demonstrate technical, legal, administrative, and professional excellence at all times. We will constantly strive to create more responsive, efficient, and effective process for achieving SMCRA's objectives.

## OUR CUSTOMERS

Our customers are coalfield residents, environmental and citizen groups, and the coal industry who operate under and are affected by SMCRA. Our primary customers are citizens of the coalfields and the general public.

## SERVICES OFFERED

As our modernization and reinvention programs are completed over the course of the next five years, our vision for the future is to better oversee the implementation of SMCRA by reengineering services offered to our customers in an effort to meet their needs more fully. OSM is committed to providing the following services:

- o Soliciting input and using customer surveys to determine our priorities for oversight and other regulatory matters.
- o Investigating complaints regarding abandoned mines causing subsidence, landslides, or other problems.
- o Accurately and efficiently collecting abandoned mine land fees.
- o Notifying the general public of pending grant awards to States and Tribes. Coordinating grant audit resolutions to ensure that the public is protected against fraud, waste, and abuse of Federal funds.
- o Providing technical information and resource assistance to States, Tribes, coal mine operators, and the general public.
- o Providing mine map repository services in Wilkes-Barre and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
- o Providing the general public and Federal employees information regarding employment opportunities with OSM.
- o Conducting training, testing, and certification of mine personnel responsible for blasting activities on Indian and Federal lands (where no State-Federal Cooperative Agreement exists) to better protect lives and property.

## OSM'S CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

As employees of OSM, we will put our best efforts forward in striving to provide customers with the best possible service by addressing their needs in a courteous, accurate and timely manner to ensure complete customer satisfaction. For that reason we have set the following standards:

1. For outreach to coalfield citizens and the coal industry:

A meeting will be held in at least one site in each State to solicit comments regarding the oversight process and recommendations for review topics in the first quarter of evaluation year 1995.

2. For abandoned mine land emergency complaints:

The initial site visit and determination of emergency will be addressed within 48 hours of complaint.

The method to be used to abate the emergency will be determined within 30 days after the initial complaint.

Emergency declarations will be finalized by us within eight (8) hours of receipt of the State submittal in states which administer the emergency program.

3. For abandoned mine land fee collections:

OSM-1 forms will be mailed out 30 days prior to the due date, Fee Collections correspondence will be responded to within seven days. Telephone calls will be responded to within one day. Refunds will be processed within one month after receipt.

4. For state program amendments:

The availability of State program amendments will be announced in the Federal Register within 20 business days after receipt.

5. For OSM's mine map repository offices in Wilkes-Barre and Pittsburgh.

Each scheduled visitor will be provided prompt and courteous service.

Letter and telefax requests will be answered within one working day, except for a request requiring extensive research and mass reproduction of mine maps.

Requested site locations will be provided within 90 minutes of your inquiry.

Materials will be available to help you identify and easily locate the underground mine site.

6. When responding to inquiries, OSM personnel:

Will be courteous and helpful when dealing with people in person, by telephone, and in writing.

Will be timely with courteous explanation of contents of files, state program documents, etc.

Will respond to telephone calls within two business days.

7. When we assist other Federal Agencies:

We will be courteous and helpful.

We will direct their specific inquiry to the right person or place.

8. Where OSM is the regulatory authority we will provide:

Timely and efficient access to public files.

Inspection reports to permittees within 15 business days.

The opportunity to meet and confer with citizens regarding problems and issues relating to environmental protection and surface coal mining operations.

9. For the OSM Applicant Violator System we will provide:

Permit Recommendation Evaluations to the States within three business days of request.

Abandoned Mine land Emergency Contract Award Evaluations within four hours of request.

Respond to outside industry requests for information within three business days of request.

Respond to OSM, State and Industry requests for Ad Hoc computer reports within three business days of request.

#### ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN FISCAL 1995

\* Abandoned Mined land Emergency Complaints

95% of the emergency complaints were addressed within the allotted timeframe.

\* Applicant Violator System

97% of the information that was requested, was received within the allotted timeframe.

\* Wilkes-Barre and Pittsburgh Mine Map Repository Offices

97% of customer requests for materials were provided in the allotted timeframe.

\* State Programs

97% of the State Program amendments were announced in the allotted timeframe.

\* Where OSM Is A Regulatory Authority

OSM has met with and conferred with citizens on several occasions regarding problems and issues relating to environmental protection and surface mining operations. These meetings gave citizens a chance to voice their opinions on various issues. The meetings were very positive.

\* Field Office Directors

For outreach to coalfield citizens and the coal industry, a meeting was held in at least one site in each State to solicit comments regarding the oversight process. The public input was used by OSM in designing the oversight for the upcoming year. Because of the public input process that land use is more important to the public than how

many violations the State may miss. Therefore our Indianapolis Field Office has discontinued its random sample inspections and worked with State officials to determine ways to more effectively measure the rate at which land is returned to productive uses after mining.

## PART 2

### OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING CUSTOMER SURVEY SUMMARY RESULTS

Section 1 of the survey was to help OSM identify the segment of the customer base from which the questionnaire was coming.

As of mid-September OSM had received 16% of the surveys that were mailed out. The returned surveys represented the following categories of customers:

- State/Tribal Regulatory Partners
- Industry/Coal Operator/Permittees
- Citizens/Environmentalists
- Other (other Federal Agencies)

Section 2 of the survey gathered data on which media the customer used in obtaining information on OSM products and services and recommendations for improvement for other means for information distribution.

Most of the responses reflected that the Federal Register and direct mailings were the predominant method of receiving information - although an increasing number of respondents indicated the use of, and recommendation for, more electronic distribution of information (i.e. electronic bulletin boards/Internet, etc.).

The Office of Surface Mining is making progress in providing more electronic means of information dissemination. At the present time OSM participates in the Internet and does provide information via a bulletin service.

Section 3 of the survey dealt with OSM's product and service delivery, and the quality of that delivery. It also determined the quality of responsiveness to customer requests. The overall summary evaluation of responsiveness quality was perceived by the customer to be cooperative and helpful. The following represents the evaluation and results of the delivery of OSM's major program activities.

Regulatory Programs - The overall summary ratings of OSM's customers for this activity showed that OSM was doing a satisfactory job of performing the functions involved in this activity, but, a number of comments reflected a need for improvement.

OSM has done considerable reengineering in this program activity and feels that more results oriented goals and performance measurements will help the agency improve in this area. This reengineering was done through a shared commitment with OSM's state regulatory partners.

Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Programs - Again, the overall summary ratings of OSM's customers for this activity were satisfactory, but, it too, has room for improvement.

This program activity was also recently reengineered in conjunction with OSM's partners in a shared commitment for the improvement of the AML program.

Results oriented goals and measurements will definitely improve this program.

Technical Assistance and Technology Transfer - The ratings of this activity varied depending on the responding customer category. Technical assistance (including training) received very good ratings from state/tribal regulatory customers, but, reflected a need for improvement from other segments of the customer base.

OSM will be assessing and reengineering this program activity in the coming year and will be soliciting more customer input for the improvement in the quality and deliverability of this program activity.

Section 4 of the survey solicited suggestions for improving OSM's services. Many of the comments received dealt with OSM's role in oversight. These comments reflected the very essence for OSM's reengineering efforts in both its Title IV and Title V programs. The reengineered oversight program activities now reflect a results oriented measurement and evaluation system. It is the outcome and not the process that OSM is evaluating when performing its state performance evaluations. Both of these programs were reengineered with the cooperation and shared commitment of OSM and its partners, the states.

#### HOW TO CONTACT OSM

If you would like copies of our Customer Service Report or you have comments that you would like to make concerning our services, you can contact the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Office of Strategic Planning and Budget, on (202) 208-7851.

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