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Project Reclaim Regional Industrial Site Ready for Business

Virginia Department of Energy's Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization Program provided \$4,844,893 in federal grant dollars

CLEVELAND, VA- Russell County is open for business as they cut the ribbon on a new regional industrial park. Known as Project Reclaim, the idea began as an application to the Virginia Department of Energy (Virginia Energy) in 2017 for federal funding through the Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization Program. Five years and nearly \$5 million later, this 160 acre site is one-of-a-kind with unique marketing assets to potential businesses.

“Project Reclaim is in a great position to host new economic development and provide jobs in the coalfields region,” **said Congressman Morgan Griffith**. “Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization Program funding helped turn this location from an abandoned coal processing plant to an industrial site. I look forward to the opportunities it will bring to the people of Russell County.”

“We expect to see hundreds of people driving to work here very soon,” **said Virginia Energy Deputy Director Will Clear**. “Land where coal was processed for many decades is getting another chance to serve Russell County as a highly competitive industrial site.”

Because of its coal industry history, Project Reclaim offers existing rail line, access to a sufficient and robust electrical grid, over a mile of maintained road and an abundance of water and natural gas supply.

“We are now able to successfully compete for business we might not have imagined before,” **said Russell County Industrial Development Authority Executive Director Ernie McFaddin**. “This site should prove as a model of how mined land reclamation can be key in economic development.”

In addition to site preparation, Russell County Reclamation, the company responsible for the reclamation and on-site construction, also removed 32 acres of coal waste. Coal waste is material that was once considered invaluable in coal mining before 1977. It contains pieces of coal and other minerals and is often harmful to nearby watersheds.

“We were so glad to be able to remove the hundreds of thousands of cubic yards of coal waste through this project,” **said Russell County Reclamation Partner John Matney.** “That also meant protecting 2,000 feet of stream bank that is part of our very sacred Clinch River Watershed. We celebrate the economic and environmental impact of the work completed here today.”

Russell County Reclamation removed an old preparation plant that had operated on the site since the 1950’s and closed ten portals left behind by coal mining that occurred before 1977. Further development on nearby parcels was funded by the Virginia Tobacco Commission.

The Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization Program originated in a federal omnibus bill in 2017. Virginia Energy has received \$10 million annually for economic development on abandoned mine lands. The program administered is by the Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation Enforcement.

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