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Huffman Testifies Before U.S. Senate Committee

Testimony focuses on EPA's regulatory framework

By Jake Glance

West Virginia DEP Cabinet Secretary Randy Huffman testified before the <u>U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee</u> on March 9, detailing the state's working relationship with the U.S. EPA.

"The concept of cooperative feder-

alism is embedded in the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and other federal environmental statutes," Secretary Huffman said in his written remarks.

"Common among these laws is a design under which the states serve as the primary regulators. Congress' carefully crafted approach places the core responsibilities in state agencies, which are much closer and more responsive to the local concerns of the people and the environment they protect than the distant bureaucracies in Washington."

Huffman detailed several areas



DEP Cabinet Secretary Randy Huffman testified before the U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee.

where the EPA has "been on a mission to totally remake the American regulatory landscape."

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Statewide Litter Collection Events Scheduled for April

Adopt-A-Highway, Make It Shine depend on volunteers

by Jake Glance

Two annual litter collection efforts, utilizing thousands of volunteers working across West Virginia, will be held in April.

The "West Virginia Make It Shine" event is set for the first two weeks of April and the "West Virginia Adopt-A-Highway" spring roadside litter cleanup event, which is a partnership between the DEP and Department of Transportation (DOT), is set for April 30.

The difference between the programs is that Adopt-A-Highway focuses on areas along roadways while Make It Shine cleanups can be anywhere.

"Neither of these programs would work without the volunteers," said Terry Carrington, an environmental



resources specialist with the DEP's Rehabilitation Environmental Action Plan (REAP).

Carrington said this year there are more than 150 registered Make It Shine cleanups in 48 of West Virginia's 55 counties. Those events include more than 5,000 volunteers who will be picking up trash along roadways, in cemeteries, in parks, and around schools.

"Neither of these programs would work without the volunteers."

- Terry Carrington

"I especially like the cleanups at schools, because those get the students involved and it's a great chance to start



learning environmental stewardship and responsibility at an early age," Carrington said.

There's no way to know how much trash is collected every year during the Make It Shine cleanup, he said, but it's definitely into the hundreds of tons.

Kim Smith, an environmental resources specialist with REAP who handles Adopt-A-Highway, said the roadside litter cleanup saw more than 10,000 volunteers with 760 groups collect about 17,000 bags of trash last spring. All told, volunteers put in more than 80,000 hours of work picking up trash and keeping West Virginia's country roads beautiful.

See CLEANUP, Page 6

Brooke, Hancock Counties Offer Ongoing Tire Recycling

by Jake Glance

In the past, if someone had a few old tires that needed disposed of and there were no scheduled tire collection events in the area, that person was out of luck. And often, those unwanted tires wound up in a creek or over a hillside.

But people in Hancock and Brooke counties now have another option besides waiting months for a collection event, which may only happen once a year, or illegally dumping their tires. These counties are the first in the state to partner with the DEP to offer tire collections on a regular basis.

Brooke and Hancock county residents can drop off up to 10 tires at a time. The tires can be from cars and light trucks, motorcycles, or riding lawnmowers.

See TIRES, Page 6

PEIA "Healthy Tomorrows" Forms Due By May 16

Forms filled out by doctors include blood pressure, glucose and cholesterol levels

by Jake Glance

West Virginia state employees who are covered under the PPB Plan of the Public Employees Insurance Agency (PEIA) need to submit a "Healthy Tomorrows" form by May 16.

If this form is not received by PEIA by that date, the employee's deductible increases by \$500.

Only those who have PPB plans have to submit the forms, and only the policy holder has to provide the information on the form. Spouses and children of state employees do not have to submit these forms. Also, if the policy holder has had these tests performed by a doctor in the last year (as of April 1, 2015), he or she does not have to have them performed again. The doctor can simply fill out the form using data previously collected.

The "Healthy Tomorrows" form

includes data such as blood pressure, waist circumference, total cholesterol, and glucose levels.

All DEP employees should have received an email from Cher Szerokman, benefits coordinator, detailing this process.

The form that employees need to take to their doctors can be printed from that email, which was sent on March 9 and again on March 14. The form is also available on the PEIA website here.

The doctor will need to fill out the necessary information and then could send in the form to PEIA, though sprin Szerokman recommends discussing these arrangements with the doctor. It's ultimately the policy holder's responsibility to make sure that PEIA gets the form, but some doctors will offer to contact.

send it in, she said. However, it must be sent by U.S. Mail, per PEIA. It may be easier - or may give the policy holder more peace of mind - to mail the form personally, she said.

Szerokman also recommends pointing out to your doctor that there is a diagnosis code on the printable form that will waive any fees associated with collecting this information.

This form is Step Two of the "Healthy Tomorrows" plan. Step One, which was completed last year, was to name a primary care physician. Step Three, which will be completed next spring, will involve making improvement on the numbers collected in Step Two

Employees who have questions regarding "Healthy Tomorrows" can contact Szerokman here.



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Fifth grade students at Shady Spring Elementary School in Raleigh County are busy putting the finishing touches on a mural that will include hundreds of plastic bottle caps. The teacher, Susan Vandall, got the idea from Pinterest but the artwork was painted by her talented students.

Artful Project "Caps" Environmental Education

Hundreds of bottle caps used in school's mural

by Jake Glance

According to the National Geographic Society, Americans use about 29 billion plastic water bottles every year.

That's a lot of plastic winding up in landfills. Or worse, along the side of the road or in streams.

In addition to recycling, there is a way to use at least part of those bottles to beautify our surroundings rather than pollute them.

In fact, the fifth grade class at Shady Spring Elementary School in Raleigh County is using hundreds of plastic bottle caps to beautify their campus.

"Our school is very overpopulated," said Susan Vandall, the teacher of the class.

"We have six classrooms behind the school in trailers. The area is not very attractive so I wanted a way to spruce it up. This area also provides a space for students to eat outside when the weather is nice. I love to make trash into treasures." Vandall said a group called "The Green Team" made up of some of the school's fifth graders head up the recycling effort at Shady Spring.

She said the inspiration for the mural came from Pinterest, a website full of nifty projects for do-it-yourselfers and teachers.

"Students from the entire school brought in caps - different colors, sizes, and shapes - for the mural," Vandall said

"A large portion came from the lids collected for the Coke Rewards Program. We also got some caps from the lunchroom. When we needed different colors ,Sherry Hunter, who works at the Raleigh County Solid Waste Authority, gave us some she had saved."

The artwork for he mural was designed and painted by the students. It combines a lesson in recycling with a lesson in how sunlight helps plants grow. The 8-foot-by-12-foot mural includes about 5,000 stainless steel screws holding the bottle caps to marine grade plywood, which has been covered by several coats of polyure-thane.

Vandall said she tries to do at least one big environmental project with her students every year. The school has an



The bottle cap project is designed to instill environmental awareness in the students and their parents.

outdoor classroom and steps made out of recycled tires.

Sara Prior, with the DEP's Youth Environmental Program, said Vandall's class enrolled in the YEP last spring.

"It's teaching the students to think about how much trash is produced by individuals and how they can reduce and reuse in a creative way," she said. "This mural will be an example for the entire school and community to learn from, and hopefully will inspire others to reduce their ecological footprint."

Vandall said the school's principal, Penny Carrico, is also very supportive of the projects.

"It creates an atmosphere where students have to collaborate with one another. The projects make recycling into a real world experience."

Ready For

DAQ permit engineer earned pilot's license thanks to scholarship fund

by Colleen O'Neill

When you're in college, a phone call from Mom often leads to getting your laundry cleaned, a reminder to do some extra studying, or can involve planning a trip home. For Caraline Griffith, it resulted in a pilot's license.

"I was in school in Morgantown and my mom called me to tell me her and Dad had read a newspaper article

about a man named Michael Lakin, who was an ace flyer," she said.





Caraline Griffith sits at the plane's controls with her sister Emily as her passenger.

currently works for the Division of Air Quality as a permit engineer, explained that Lakin would participate in aerobatic flying exhibitions, demonstrating his skill and knowledge of the craft. She said Lakin had recently been killed in an accident while doing what he loved.



DAQ Permit Engineer Caraline Griffith earned her pilot's license thanks to the Mike Lakin Memorial Scholarship. To obtain a pilot's license, trainees must have 40 to 60 hours of supervised flight time.

"They started the Mike Lakin Memorial Scholarship, to help underprivileged Charleston-area residents aged 15 to 24. I decided to apply."

She was no stranger to flying a plane.

"I had started flight training a couple of years prior to hearing about the scholarship, but was only able to afford an hour at a time, and even then it was only about once a month," Griffith said.

"After five hours of flight training I could no longer afford to take them, so I gave up," she said. "When I learned of this scholarship and the man Mike Lakin was, I knew I had to apply."

"I like flying because it makes you feel sort of free," she said. "You're no longer bound to the Earth physically and it gives you a whole new view of the world. It's very fantastical because in your mind you are a super hero or a dragon or even just a bird that has no limits. It's a very liberating experience."

She explained that flight training,

or just flying itself, is quite expensive. To rent an airplane at Yeager Airport cost \$120 per hour, and an additional \$40 per hour for the cost of a certified flight instructor (CFI). To obtain a pilot's license, trainees are required to have between 40 and 60 hours of flight time. That's a cost of between \$6,400 and \$9,600, and that doesn't include equipment. Pilots communicate with each other and the tower via headphones, and many use the headphones on the plane or borrow a pair. Others buy a pair that show their personality.

"I just love the color pink, so I just had to have pink headphones," Griffith said

To apply for the scholarship, Griffith had to submit a resumé and answer five questions that reflected her character. She then had an interview in which she met with members of the Scholarship Committee.

"The evening after the interview, they called me and told me that I had won the scholarship."

Griffith said that when she was on

the phone, it was a struggle to keep her composure. When she hung up, she let out a high-pitch squeal.

"Flight training began a week later, and Paul, my CFI, would take me up whenever I had a few free hours."

Griffith was attending West Virginia University at the time and was able to learn about flight and flight mechanics through the school's Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering program.

The pilot's license isn't just a temporary fix for her love of adventure; Griffith plans to keep it up to date.

"My pilot's license is good forever," she said. "It doesn't expire, but every two years you have to take a ride with a CFI and get an evaluation to see if you are still capable of flying or if you need some remedial coursework."

"Once you have an FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) license in America, you are certified to fly anywhere in the world. I think it would be really neat to just fly somewhere warm, maybe Florida."

Cicadas Set To Emerge From 17-Year "Slumber"

by Jake Glance

It could be a plot to a science fiction horror movie. Big five-eyed flying insects have been waiting underground, growing larger and larger, preparing to emerge and annoy everyone with their incessant, sometimes near-deafening, chirping.

But it's not fiction. It's fact. And it's about to happen in the next two months. The state's largest cicada brood is set to hatch soon. And when that happens, their golden shells will be attached to trees or littering our lawns.

There will be millions of cicadas

whizzing around. The species' large number is a defense mechanism against extinction. If there are many insects, predators cannot eat all of them. Most of the brood will hatch in an area stretching from Ohio County down to northern Kanawha County.

Cicadas are commonly incorrectly called "locusts" - which are small grasshopper-like insects.

The good news about cicadas? There's no danger of being bitten. However, cicadas do urinate - it's usually called cicada rain.



As cicadas grow they "molt," or shed, the outer layer of their skin. Snakes molt in a similar way.

"Quotable"

"The earth will not continue to offer its harvest, except with faithful stewardship. We cannot say we love the land and then



take steps to destroy it for use by future generations."

- Pope Saint John Paul II, Sept. 17, 1987

Congratulations to Employees of the Month and Rewards & Recognition Recipient!



The October 2015 Employee of the Month is **Debbie Longanacre**. In just two short years, she has proven herself to be extremely valuable in several different roles.

It would be an understatement to say that the recent transition from FIMS to OASIS has been a challenge. However, she picked up on the new system rapidly and has been instrumental in developing excel reports that offices rely upon for various state and federal reporting purposes.

After the recent retirement of an Accounting Technician, she stepped in with a positive attitude, taking on additional duties as a result of the OASIS implementation.





The December 2015 Employee of the Month is **Craig Hatcher**. His knowledge and great customer service after 30-plus years of state service continually proves to be invaluable.

With his position being within the agency's Fiscal Services Section, he daily provides assistance to other agency staff with their financial issues. He always provides very thorough and detailed information, and does so in a format that is easily understood.

He is always very pleasant and willing to stop what he is doing to provide whatever assistance is needed.

James Lucas, a Division of Mining and Reclamation employee in the Logan Field Office, was presented with a Rewards and Recognition Award.

He was assigned the task of reviewing and processing 30 applications, addressing the transfer of 90-plus Article 3 permits involved in the recent bankruptcy sale between Patriot Coal Corporation to Black Hawk Mining

He developed a method to effi-



The February 2016 Employee of the Month is **Eva Thompson**. She is described as having a unique and kind presence that makes her continually volunteer to assist any coworker in need.

She is responsible for tracking enforcement actions, processing FOIA requests, assisting field staff with reporting, along with many other duties. While describing this Thompson, the nominator said: "Buildings remain erect not because of the bricks and windows, but because of the cement that holds them together. This employee is definitely part of the cement that makes DEP a great place to work!"

ciently track all incoming applications and the information necessary to grant advance approval so that work stoppage on the permits was either avoided altogether, or greatly minimized.

This employee worked with permitting support staff to ensure that all notifications of advance approval were made in a timely manner and that all replacement bonds for the permits were accurate prior to being forwarded for approval by the Attorney General's Office.

DEP's Mobile Aquarium Ready To Crisscross State in 2016

by Jake Glance



The DEP's mobile aquarium is ready to crisscross West Virginia in 2016. The aquarium, which holds 1,700 gallons of fresh water and weighs about 25,000 pounds when full, is scheduled to appear at seven events to highlight the fish that call the Mountain State's lakes and streams home.

The schedule for 2016 is:

- April 21: The DEP's Earth Day celebration at the Clay Center in downtown Charleston;
- May 17-19: The Bureau for Senior Services Annual Conference at the Cedar Lakes Conference Center near Ripley;
- June 20: West Virginia Day at the Wildlife Center in French Creek;
- Aug. 19-20 (tentative): Summersville Dam Celebration
- Aug. 30 (makeup date Sept. 13): Three Fork Creek Survey in Grafton;
- Sept. 17-18: National Hunting and Fishing Days at Stonewall Jackson Resort State Park:
- Oct. 14-15: The Black Walnut Festival in Spencer.

Regular Session Wraps; DEP-Supported Bills Become Effective In June

by Jake Glance

The two bills the DEP ran during the Regular Session of the 2016 West Virginia Legislature passed and will become law in June.

The bills are:

House Bill 4540: Repealing the prohibition of disposal of covered electronic devices in landfills.

"We did agree to substitute language specifying that if the local solid waste authority determines there is a reasonable, cost effective recycling alternative available for these devices, they will remain prohibited from landfill disposal in that waste-shed," said DEP General Counsel Kristin Boggs.

HB 4550 is effective 90 days from passage, or June 5, 2016.

Senate Bill 474: Exempting DEP's construction and reclamation from the requirement of review by the Division of Purchasing.

SB474 is effective 90 days from passage, or June 6, 2016.

Meanwhile, the DEP's rules package wasn't acted on by the end of the session. It might be included on the agenda of a special session the governor will be calling for passage of a state budget.



The Regular Session of the 2016 West Virginia Legislature ended at midnight on March 12. The two bills drafted by the DEP passed but the agency's rules package is still in limbo.

Carpooling Helps Environment, Saves Money

by Colleen O'Neill

Everybody loves saving money. And if you can help protect the environment in the process, it's a win win!

"I felt like I was getting an additional paycheck, thanks to the savings just in gas," said Chris Kyle, a member of the Business and Technology Office (BTO) who takes part in an office carpool. He and four other DEP employees commute from the Huntington area every day of the work week.

Kyle explained that the carpool has changed over time. It started with two participants and has evolved to include five members. They are Kyle, Netar Wadhwa (DWWM), Mark Collins (DWWM), Dave Belcher (OOG), and Bin Schmitz (DAQ).

"After I started the carpool in May of 2010, we expanded to five people riding in the pool, And now, five years later, only two of the original five from when I joined - Netar and myself - are still in the same carpool," Kyle said.

Carpooling keeps extra carbon emissions from polluting the air and it frees up parking spaces for co-workers. But what's in it for the individual users?

"The benefits far outweigh any costs," Kyle said. He explained the money savings, both in gas and car maintenance, is a definite plus.

"When I started at the DEP in December of 2009, I was hesitant to join the carpool because I wanted the freedom of having my car available if I needed it. Now, I gladly trade that

freedom for a little extra mon-

What about camaraderie built during those commutes?

"While in the carpool, you definitely build a friendship with each other. We are able to not only talk about work, but about what is going on in our lives. Sharing these kinds of stories brings to the surface interests that a few or all of us might share."

The only drawbacks Kyle could think of would be being crowded in some of the smaller vehicles and maybe the loss of personal freedom that having a privately owned vehicle at work allows.

The carpool operates with everyone meeting in a strategic location at a specified time. For this crew, the Huntington Mall parking lot near Panera Bread works. And the stipulated departure time is 7:10 a.m.

"Sometimes we leave earlier, if everyone arrives before that time," Kyle said. "Usually our drive time from the meeting spot takes 45 minutes. Though various factors like traffic or accidents can either accelerate or greatly diminish our arrival

As with any group that has more than one personality, there is a need for keeping the schedule straight is a must.

"Not everybody has the same car. Right now, we have three SUVs and



Totally not a clown car, at all: Mark Collins, Chris Kyle, Netar Wadhwa, Bin Schmitz, and Dave Belcher are ready to head home.

two four-door sedans," he said. "One requirement is that anyone who wants to join our carpool has a vehicle with four doors. We aren't children. Climbing over people and seats gets tiresome."

"When you have all five of us getting out of one of the smaller fourdoor sedans, it's like the DEP version of a clown car," Kyle joked.

Another rule addresses being late for the morning departure. Kyle explained that a former employee was late many times.

"In trying to keep all of us punctual for work, we instituted a rule several years ago that if you are more than five minutes late for the carpool three times, you owe everyone in the carpool an ice cream."

With five people and five days, Kyle says the schedule of who drives when is closely tracked in an Excel Spreadsheet maintained by Wadhwa.

Defensive Driving Course Required to Use State Vehicles

by Jake Glance

The annual defensive driving course for all state employees who drive state vehicles is now available online

To watch the videos, and then take a short quiz, click here.

To log in to the course, you will need your network logon ID and your password. These are the same that you use to log on to your computer.

The training must be completed by May 13.

Once you get all of the questions correct on the quiz, an email will automatically be generated that states that you completed the training.

Questions can be directed to Helen Ford at extension 1299 or Steve Brightwell at extension 1041.



Truckloads of Trash Removed During Spring Cleanup

by Jake Glance

It's the time of year when people look forward to springtime events like planting their garden, Easter egg hunts, and evening strolls in the warmer weather.

It's also the time of year when people dread having to do spring

But at the DEP headquarters in Kanawha City, employees threw out or recycled hundreds of pounds of unwanted items

Jeremiah Johnson, who handled the spring cleanup, said DEP employees filled up 12 secure shred bins and 15 regular recycling bins. He said he also took three pickup truck loads to surplus property and also took one truck load of e-recycling.





April is National Safe Digging Month

Now that spring is almost here, many homeowners are anxious to grab their shovels and start ripping out weeds and planting new trees or flow-

While there's no doubt that exercising a green thumb is good for the soul, it is important to be careful and follow the proper procedures.

Work at a slower, easier pace to start and allow the body to warm up. Do a few mild, easy stretches and ramp up until a capacity that can be handled safely and comfortably is reached.

Use the proper shovel for the task. Generally, short handled shovels are used for spreading or laying (asphalt, dirt, mulch, etc.) and long handled, pointed shovels are used for digging.

TIRES

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When working with either shovel, place one hand close to the load for proper balance and to reduce stress on back muscles.

Use the legs, not the back, when shoveling. Typically leg muscles are significantly stronger and better able to handle heavy work.

When spreading or laying dirt and mulch, turn the forward foot and body in the direction the material will be laid or spread. Avoid twisting, which will increase the risk of injury.

Call before any digging takes place. An underground utility line is struck every three minutes nationwide. This can result in injury, repair costs, fines, and service outages. Homeowners are encouraged to call 811 a few



days before digging with details about where the digging will take place and the type of work being done. The local utility offices in the area will be contacted, and if necessary, will send out crews to mark the lines. Because some utility companies don't participate in the 811 program, the company's customer service line may need to be called. But 811 is a great first step.

For more information about 811 or the Common Ground Alliance, visit www.call811.com or www.commongroundalliance.com.

with DEP, that fee is waived.

The rims must be removed before

they will be accepted. Rob Mark, operations manager at the Hancock County Recycling Center, said in the first week or so of the tire recycling effort there, which started in March, more than 25 people had

"I think that's the reason DEP looked our way," Mark said. "Because DEP knew we already had the setup for handling a lot of tires."

dropped off more than 200 tires.

Previously, the tire recycling effort in Hancock County involved a small

fee. But now, thanks to the partnership

The tire recycling efforts in Hancock and Brooke counties are limited to residents of those counties.

Scott Lemons, a DEP environmental resources specialist in the Fairmont office, worked closely with both recycling centers to implement these pro-

"It is important to pursue this throughout the state to eliminate individuals from stockpiling tires at their homes until the one-day collection for their county, causing an eyesore and possible health hazard from creating a mosquito habitat," Lemons said.

"Also, some individuals choose

not to stockpile these tires and simply throw them into an illegal roadside dump site. These are the things we are trying to prevent with this program."

Brooke County residents can bring their unwanted tires to the recycling center next to the animal shelter off Route 2 between Beech Bottom and Windsor Heights from 8 a.m. to noon every Friday.

In Hancock County, tires will be accepted from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays and from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturdays. The recycling center, which is located on Gas Valley Road near Oak Glen High School, is closed on Wednesdays, Sundays, and holidays.

"It goes beyond just aesthetic beauty," he said.

"Litter is a serious problem in so many ways. It can clog storm drains and cause flood issues in urban areas. It can also cause issues with wildlife. Small pieces of litter can be mistaken for food or entangled in it."

Volunteers for both the Adopt-A-Highway and Make It Shine program can call 1-800-322-5530 for more information.

EPW

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Huffman said those areas include the EPA's carbon rules for coal-fired power plants, the EPA's issuance of "non-binding" guidance that turns out to be binding, going around proper notice and public comment rule making, and approval and interpretation of Water Quality Standards.

He also detailed DEP's troubled recent history with the Department of the Interior's Office of Surface Min-

"We do not want to create the impression that all of the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection's interactions with EPA and the federal government are negative. Across many of our programs, we have built very good working relationships with our counterparts in EPA's Region 3," Huffman said.

"Regional offices have had little autonomy to oversee programs as best fits the situations of states in the region. Decisions are made at a distance and without taking local situations into consideration. We look forward to better days when the states are freer to carry out the responsibilities with which Congress has entrusted us - to promote a healthy environment for all of our citizens."

This is the second time Huffman has testified before a U.S. Senate committee in recent months. He testified before the Energy and Natural Resources Committee on Oct. 27 regarding the OSM's proposed stream protection rule.

No "kitten" - we love a good story idea! Let us know right meow!

CLEANUP

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There's a big push this year to recruit even more groups to the Adopt-A-Highway program. Billboards are going up around the state on April 1 with information about the program and how to volunteer.

"After the groups do their cleanup, they call in and tell us how many bags of trash they had and the DOT will come and pick up the bright orange

trash bags we provided," Smith said.

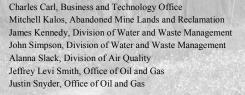
Volunteers are also provided with high-visibility orange vests and gloves to use during their cleanup events.

"The volunteers are so excited to clean up their neighborhood," Smith

"People take to it so well once they get involved in it. They take ownership and take it on themselves to do something about litter."

Carrington said there is also another reason people should consider cleanup events like these.

New Hires



Recent/Upcoming Retirements

Robert Betterton Division of Air Quality Mark Church, Division of Land Restoration George Dasher, Division of Water and Waste Management James Gaston, Division of Land Restoration Joe Hickman, Division of Water and Waste Management Michael Kromer, DMR-Office of Explosives and Blasting Debbie Martin, Business and Technology Office Barbara Moore, Division of Mining and Reclamation Darrell O'Brien, DMR-Office of Explosives and Blasting