



Commonwealth of Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet

Matthew G. Bevin, Governor

Charles G. Snively, Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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\$275,689 in Grants Announced to Fund Clean Diesel

Program Will Reduce Diesel Emissions from Kentucky School Buses

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Oct. 8, 2018) - Energy and Environment Cabinet Secretary Charles Snively today announced the 2018 Kentucky Clean Diesel Grant Program, which will provide \$275,689 for projects to reduce diesel emissions from aging school buses in the Commonwealth.

Funding is being made available through the federal Diesel Emission Reduction Act and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. This competitive program is open to all public school districts and private schools located in Kentucky.

“This program will help schools protect the health of our children by reducing diesel emissions and improving air quality,” Sec. Snavelly said. “I encourage all of our school districts to apply for this funding.”

Kentucky public school districts and private schools that own and operate school buses are eligible to apply for funding through this grant program, which will reimburse up to 25 percent of the cost to replace a school bus. Grant recipients are responsible for the remaining 75 percent.

Kentucky school buses travel about 100 million miles each year, providing transportation for more than 350,000 children. Diesel exhaust can negatively affect children, who have a faster breathing rate than adults and whose lungs are not yet fully developed.

New buses emit up to 60 times fewer pollutants than those built before 1995, but budget restrictions often push bus replacement to the back burner.

“This program will provide additional resources that make it easier for school districts to replace older, more polluting buses with newer, cleaner ones,” said Department for Environmental Protection Deputy Commissioner Sean Alteri.

Proposals that achieve the most cost-effective emission reductions, and those that demonstrate the greatest emission reductions will be given priority in grant awards, as will applicants located in current or former non-attainment areas for ozone or particulate matter.

The purchase of new vehicles to expand the fleet is not covered by this program. Vehicles being replaced must be scrapped and rendered inoperable. Evidence of appropriate disposal, such as a photograph of the scrapped vehicle including serial number and VIN, will be required in order to receive grant funds.

The deadline to apply for funds is November 8, 2018. To apply, visit the Division for Air Quality’s web-site at <http://air.ky.gov/Pages/CleanDiesel.aspx>.

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\$1.1 Million Abandoned Mine Lands Pilot Grant Announced for Historic Stearns Downtown Revitalization

STEARNS, Ky. (Oct. 4, 2018) - U.S. Rep. Harold "Hal" Rogers (KY-05), U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and Governor Matt Bevin today announced a \$1.1 million Abandoned Mine Lands grant to renovate and revitalize Stearns, KY and construct railroad-related repairs and improvements to the Big South Fork Scenic Railway.

The grant was awarded by the Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet's Division of Abandoned Mine Lands to McCreary County Heritage Foundation, Inc., as part of the 2017 Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) Pilot program to revitalize the coalfields in Kentucky's Appalachian region.

The project will involve improvements to the town's historic district that will include construction of a restaurant and reconstruction of a theater. Historic Stearns Coal & Lumber Company stores will be rehabbed and repurposed into museums and a visitor center. And the former company headquarters will be converted into a bed and breakfast.

Railway improvements will include tie and trace replacement, drainage improvements, steam engine and diesel engine locomotive repairs, railyard/repair shop refurbishment, the purchase of a backup diesel engine and walking/ATV trail construction to the Yamacraw Bridge.

Congressman Rogers announced the grant Thursday at an event in Stearns, Ky.

"Stearns was once a major hub for coal and lumber exports, and helped build a stronger economy in Southern Kentucky. This project will breathe life back into this historic town by investing in our story and tourism in our unique region," said Congressman Rogers, who has championed \$80 million in federal funding for Kentucky through the AML Pilot program since 2016, alongside U.S. Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY).

"The AML Pilot grants are designed to revitalize our former coal towns and help diversify our economy. This project is a great example of how we can highlight our past and help pave a new path for our future."

In addition to the AML pilot grant, the Heritage Foundation has received a \$2 million U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant with support from Senator McConnell and Congressman Rogers.

“With these two federal grant awards, the Stearns community can revitalize some of Kentucky’s treasured locations, particularly those listed on the National Register of Historic Places,” said Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell who contacted the Trump administration in support of the federal grant announced today. “As a member of the subcommittee that funds the AML pilot program, I am proud to join Congressman Rogers to champion it each year in the appropriations process.”

“The grants awarded through this pilot program have had a number of positive impacts in Eastern Kentucky. In this historic coal community, an injection of federal funding to renovate the Big South Fork Scenic Railway can help increase tourism and spur economic growth in the region. I commend the work of these Kentuckians to restore the beauty of these heritage sites, and I remain committed to partnering with Governor Bevin, Secretary Snavely and Congressman Rogers to support investments in Appalachia.”

The U.S. Department of Agriculture—Rural Development has also awarded the project a \$100,000 Rural Business Enterprise Grant.

Stearns, KY and the Big South Fork Scenic Railway are significant tourist attractions. The town of Stearns was built in the early 1900s by the Stearns Coal & Lumber Company to serve as the hub of a logging and mining empire that would control over 200 square miles of land, build the Kentucky & Tennessee Railway, erect the first all-electric sawmill in the U.S., and employ over 2,200 people living and working in 18 coal and lumber camps.

“This AML investment will assist with important revitalization efforts contributing to economic growth in the Stearns community,” said Gov. Bevin. “McCreary County is a beautiful part of Kentucky and offers a truly unique combination of outdoor recreation and historical opportunities. This funding will promote increased tourism activities to attract new visitors and development to the region.”

The Big South Fork Scenic Railway attracts on average 30,000 visitors a year, while approximately 600,000 visit the National Big South Fork River and Recreation Area. The number that ride the train has decreased over time and

much of the rail system has been in operation for over 80 years and is nearing the end of its useful life.

The train carries tourists from Stearns to the Blue Heron Mine which is owned and operated by the National Parks Service as part of the Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area.

“Last year, when the railroad hosted THE POLAR EXPRESS™ railway tour for the first time, it was a huge success attracting over 7,000 riders,” said Energy and Environment Cabinet Secretary Charles Snavely. “Innovation such as that is why we are excited about this project.”

The AML Pilot project, funded through the U.S. Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation Enforcement (OSMRE), is a joint effort by the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development, the Department for Local Government, the SOAR initiative in Eastern Kentucky, the Kentucky Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet and the Energy and Environment Cabinet, Division of Abandoned Mine Lands.

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