



## Commonwealth of Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet

**Steven L. Beshear, Governor**

**Leonard K. Peters, Secretary**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Dick Brown  
(502) 545-1035**

### **Bell County miners trapped underground by floodwaters safely rescued**

**FRANKFORT, Ky. – (June 20, 2011)** – Three miners trapped 600 feet below the entrance to a Bell County coal mine have been safely rescued. They were brought to the surface at 8:22 p.m. EDT by mine rescue teams.

The miners, identified as Parnell Witherspoon, Doug Warren and Russell Asher, became trapped some 600 feet below the surface of the James River Coal – Bell County Coal Corp. Jellico Number 1 mine shortly before 7:00 a.m. Monday morning when water from a nearby box cut flooded the mine entrance. A diversion ditch atop the box cut apparently failed allowing water that accumulated from a 6 inch overnight rainfall to come into the mine opening. The water collected in a dip or swag about 180 feet inside the mine's entrance preventing the miners from exiting the mine.

Officials from the Kentucky Office of Mine Safety and Licensing (OMSL) worked jointly with federal Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) officials and the company to bring pumps to the site to remove the water. The miners were able to stay out of the water on a higher elevation point. They were taken to Middlesboro Appalachian Regional Hospital for evaluation and to be reunited with their families.

###