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Kentucky Division of Abandoned Mine Lands Announces Bell Central School Center Landslide Reclamation Project *Dangerous landslide threatening access to school to be reclaimed*

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Aug. 22, 2014) – The Department for Natural Resources' (DNR) Division of Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) announced today the award of contract and start of construction of the Bell Central School Center AML Reclamation Project in Bell County.

The project is a priority for the department because a landslide is threatening the only access to the Bell Central School Center along Highway 25.

"DNR, through the AML program, is again demonstrating its expertise in landslide stabilization in areas of eastern Kentucky that have been affected by mine water emanating from abandoned underground mines," said DNR Commissioner Steve Hohmann.

AML is authorized under Kentucky law (KRS.350) to abate hazards to public health, safety and the environment from abandoned mine lands. AML has found that agency-eligible pre-1982 mining (pre-law) has impacted the landslide affecting the entrance to the school.

State Rep. Rick Nelson assisted in locating mine maps that helped AML link the water lubricating the slide to pre-law mining above the school in the Harlan coal seam. AML personnel also field-verified a mine portal shown on the 1964 Geologic Quadrangle (GQ) map in the Pathfork coal seam that also lies above the school. AML acquired four samples of flowing water from within the slide area on the hillside below the parking lot, and all four of those samples demonstrate the typical chemical characteristics of mine water. The Hance coal seam has been mined extensively in this general area and also likely contributes to the slide.

A pre-bid meeting for the project was held on Aug. 8, and AML design engineers showed the project to potential contractors and explained the particulars of the in-house designed project.

Bell County School Superintendent Yvonne Gilliam and her staff provided AML valuable geotechnical studies and assisted AML engineers in the design process. Bids were opened on Aug. 14 and the low bid of \$2,132,348 was submitted by Jackson and Jackson Reclamation Services, Inc. from Clay County, Kentucky. The project estimate was \$2,594,242 and the average of five bids submitted was \$2,537,753.64.

The project will stabilize the landslide through construction of concrete retaining walls tied into bedrock with 30-inch diameter concrete caissons. Mine water lubricating the slide will be captured and removed from the hillside through a series of constructed rock sub-drains. Excess soil generated from the project will be hauled 6.5 miles and will help cap a landfill located on Highway 25. "Bell County School District students, their parents, our employees and our board are deeply grateful to the Kentucky Division of Abandoned Mine Lands for the nearly \$3 million it may cost to fully stabilize the road slide at Bell Central," Gilliam said. "Had our board had to invest that amount in the slide stabilization, we would have had to cut many of the projects we are now able to deliver to our young people. I extend my most heartfelt gratitude to Kentucky AML."

Bell Judge-Executive Albey Brock said he is thrilled and thankful for the response. "This project is a great and encouraging example of what can happen when all branches of government cooperate with each other and work together. I offer my most sincere thanks to the Department of Natural Resources and the Division of Abandon Mine Lands."

The Kentucky AML program not only reclaims landslides, but restores drinking water supplies to areas where water wells have been adversely impacted by pre-law mining. To date, AML has expended more than \$119 million for waterline improvements and has provided more than 15,505 households with potable water supply in 24 coalfield counties in eastern, southern and western Kentucky.

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