



## Commonwealth of Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet

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### **Kentucky Department for Natural Resources and Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative Join Premier Elkhorn, LLC for Arbor Day Celebration**

*Students plant tree seedlings on a surface coal mine to promote reforestation*

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (April 26, 2016)** – Premier Elkhorn, LLC hosted the 2016 Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative (ARRI) Arbor Day event at their Burke #49 surface mining operations located in Pike County near the community of Virgie.

“This event is a reflection of the company’s continuing commitment to environmental stewardship and a wonderful opportunity to encourage these students to protect and cherish Kentucky’s natural resources,” said Allen Luttrell, commissioner of the Department for Natural Resources.

Premier Elkhorn is a recipient of the prestigious 2015 Excellence in Reclamation Award and has been a strong supporter of Kentucky’s “Reforestation Initiative” since its inception in 1996.

Premier Elkhorn co-sponsored the celebration with the Kentucky Department for Natural Resources, the federal Office of Surface Mining, ARRI, the American Chestnut Foundation, Green Forests Work, and the Kentucky Division of Forestry. The celebration showcased partnerships that promote the planting of high-value hardwood trees on mined lands in Appalachia.

The annual Arbor Day celebration provides an educational opportunity for Kentuckians to appreciate the environmental benefits of forests throughout the Appalachians. Approximately 300 elementary students and their teachers from Millard, Elkhorn City, Dorton and Shelby Valley Elementary Schools participated in the tree planting activities. Dr. Tammy “Bee Lady” Horn and Mr. Michael French who represents Green Forests Work and the American Chestnut Foundation provided the students with presentations on the importance of honey bees and the American Chestnut prior to the tree planting.

The event took place on surface mined land that is being reforested through the Department of Natural Resources "Kentucky Reforestation Initiative" guidelines. Once established, these new forests will be capable of providing a wildlife habitat, improving water quality and sequestering carbon. For the Arbor Day celebration, native seedlings that were planted included those of the American chestnut, native oaks, black cherry and persimmon.

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