

Video leads AML on chase

By Tom Aluise

This was a first for the Department of Environmental Protection's Office of Abandoned Mine Lands — a YouTube video of adventurous high school-age boys exploring an abandoned underground coal mine in southern West Virginia.

AML Chief Eric Coberly said his office was sent a link to the home-made video in early June from the Charleston field office of the U.S. Office of Surface Mining. A former OSM employee living in Florida had run across the video and, understanding the dangers of venturing into



abandoned mines, alerted OSM officials.

"Listening to the narrative on the video, they were going a good bit back into the mine," said Coberly, who instructed his staff to immediately investigate the situation.

From the video, AML was able to determine the mine was in Raleigh County, near the unincorporated community of Abney and not far from Independence High School. Three or four boys were entering the mine through two por-



Workers seal up one of two portals that were used by Raleigh County teen-agers to explore an abandoned coal mine.

tals. Coberly was able to pick up two names from the video and information indicating that one of the

boys was a recent graduate of Independence.

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Field trips enhance interns' stay at DEP

By Tom Aluise

A group of Division of Air Quality interns may never think the same way again when they turn on the lights or crank up the air conditioner.

The four college students were treated recently to a tour of the sprawling John Amos Power Plant near Winfield. Owned by American Electric Power, the three-unit, coal-fired facility is the largest utility in the AEP system.

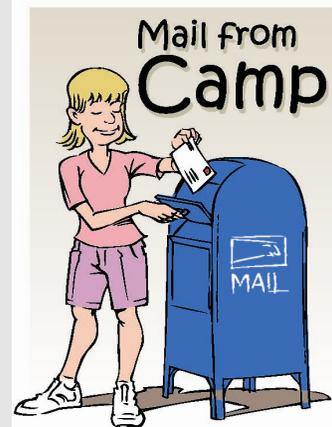
"I was amazed at the amount of work that is put into generating electricity for every day consumer use," said Chris Chadwick, a Marshall student, and one of the interns who took the tour. "I left with the impression that the electricity I take for granted every day is a much more complex process than simply flipping a switch to turn on a light, fan, or any other electrical appliance."



The DAQ's Laura Crowder, far right, accompanied four interns on a tour of the John Amos Power Plant, near Winfield.

The enormous cooling towers and smokestacks at John Amos are well-known to frequent travelers on Interstate 64, although most drive by and never think twice about how the plant produces power, or how it works to

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Kids tell us how they liked camp

Several Department of Environmental Protection employees sent their children to Junior Conservation Camp in June at Cedar Lakes, near Ripley, in Jackson County.

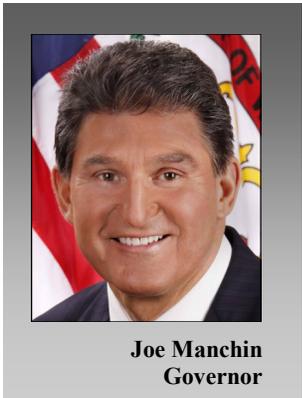
You can read about some of the kids' experiences, beginning on **Page 5**.

Appliance Rebate program

Program has many benefits

By Gov. Joe Manchin

On June 17, I participated in the launch of the Energy Efficient Appliance Rebate Program. This program is designed to put money back into the wallets of West Virginians, stimulate the state's economy, lower energy bills and reduce pollution.



Joe Manchin
Governor

It's because of these benefits that I strongly encourage all West Virginians who are considering purchasing a new appliance to take part in this rebate offer. If you're thinking about replacing your old refrigerator, adding a new dishwasher to the kitchen or upgrading your washer, the time to buy is now.

The program will last only as long as rebate funds are available.

Through the U.S. Department of Energy, more than \$1.6 million in federal stimulus money has been allocated to West Virginia to offer state residents mail-in rebates on five different ENERGY STAR appliances. Depending on the appliance, rebates range from \$20 to \$100.

West Virginia's businesses, both large and small, have been very cooperative and are excited about participating.

This program will help jumpstart the economy. Eighty-nine retailers across the state, from Alaska's in my hometown of Farmington, to Wayside Furniture in New Martinsville, are participating in this program. To be eligible for rebates, appliances must be purchased from one of these 89 participating West Virginia retailers.

In addition to boosting the economy, this program also helps reduce harmful impacts on the environment by replacing older-model appliances with newer, more efficient ones that use less energy



Gov. Joe Manchin talks about the Energy Efficient Appliance Rebate Program during a June 17 event at the State Capitol. The DEP is helping administer the \$1.6 million program.

and water. An ENERGY STAR clothes washer, for example, will save enough water to fill three backyard swimming pools, and an ENERGY STAR refrigerator will save close to 200 pounds in carbon dioxide emissions over a year and 2,500 pounds over the lifetime of the refrigerator.

The program requires proper disposal by retailers of the out-dated and inefficient appliances, thereby removing them from the electrical grid to save energy and recycling them to protect the environment.

Also, West Virginia recently signed on as the first state to participate in the Environmental Protection Agency's Responsible Appliance Disposal Program, which further promotes the proper disposal of refrigerant-containing appliances across the state.

Early returns on the rebate program are very encouraging. During the first week, 931 rebates valued at \$72,850 were reserved.

I urge West Virginians to go to www.WVApplianceRebate.com or call toll-free 877-355-9153 to learn more about the program and how they can obtain an appliance rebate.

More than 3,000 volunteers work to beautify the state

By Colleen O'Neill

Final numbers are in and the two-week Make-It-Shine statewide cleanup resulted in more than 375,000 pounds of litter being collected across West Virginia.

Administered by the Department of Environmental Protection's REAP program in April, Make-It-Shine attracted 3,111 volunteers and had a cleanup in each of the state's 55 counties.

"Every year, the program gets better," said Travis Cooper, Make-It-Shine program coordinator. "The way the volunteers care about West



Virginia and clean it up is really remarkable." Volunteers collected 17,200 pounds of metal; 386 pounds of aluminum; 96 appliances; and 3,000 tires. They cleaned up 142 miles of roadway; 84 miles of stream; 60 miles of trail; 3,586 acres of park; and 24 dumpsites.

Monroe County's 458 volunteers led the state. Burnsville collected 90,000 pounds of litter and 463 tires to rank first in the state in those two categories.



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Training sessions target water use

By Tom Aluise

As it works to develop a comprehensive Statewide Water Management Plan, the DEP's Division of Water and Waste Management continues to find ways to reach out to stakeholders.

In late May, it offered the first of four workshops on water resources planning and management. The day-and-a-half training sessions, titled "West Virginia Water Resource Management Training Workshops," are being

presented by the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin (ICPRB) and funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

The workshops are targeted for county officials, mayors, water utilities staff, watershed groups and other interested community planners. Topics include basic water science, water demand forecasting, mapping and data

tools, drought and flood planning



The DEP has asked the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin to conduct four workshops in West Virginia.

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minimize its impact on the environment.

"I really looked forward to getting a behind-the-scenes look at the facility that millions of people drive by and never think about, even though it affects pretty much everyone in West Virginia," said Margaret Crow, another DAQ intern.

Chadwick and Crow were joined on the trip by fellow interns Britany Ireland and Natalia Meshcheryakova, a Russian citizen who's attending Marshall. The DAQ's Laura Crowder organized the tour and accompanied the interns, along with DAQ employees Stephanie Hammonds and Dee Smith.

Crowder said she tries to schedule at least one plant tour a year for DAQ interns.

"I think it's important to take the interns out in the field to give them an appreciation of the work of the inspectors and the work of the plant personnel," Crowder said. "Going on a plant tour allows them to see the potential environmental impacts of the plant and what the plant personnel have to do to minimize those impacts."

Reid Strader, an engineer at John Amos, led the tour and answered questions for the interns, who learned that the plant's boilers are 19 stories high; that there



Reid Strader, (far left), an engineer at the John Amos Power Plant near Winfield, talks to a group of Division of Air Quality interns during a visit to a shelter that houses gas analyzers.

were two million tons of coal on the ground at the facility at that time; and that the plant employs about 300 people.

The interns also learned about the facility's water uses, how it deals with the byproducts of burning coal such as bottom ash and fly ash, and how its scrubbers are used to reduce air pollution out of its stacks.

"It is quite astonishing to me how environmentally conscience the electric generation industry is," said Chadwick. "And it is amazing that they put the amount of effort into air emissions pollutant reduction that they do."

"The most interesting part of the tour for me was the elaborateness of reducing air pollutant

emissions that is an ongoing process at the plant."

Crow, who attends Appalachian State, was impressed by the size of the facility.

"Everything works together," she said. "If you change one thing here it affects another separate thing all the way on the other side of the plant."

All of the interns said the trip was worthwhile.

"Field trips are important because they show interns what the DEP works with," said Ireland, a Marshall student. "We see the DEP's work put to use in these facilities. It's also a great way for interns to be well-rounded from the internship instead of just learning everything in the office."

"It sounded like a great experience for someone pursuing my field of study (environmental science)," Chadwick said. "Also, who doesn't want to be paid to go tour something? It was a win-win situation for me – get out of the office, get paid for being gone, and learn about something directly related to my career interest."

"Field trips are critical to my total experience as an intern because exposure to your career field is critical to gaining a better understanding of the path of work you are choosing," Chadwick said. "It shows just how your studies in college could influence the world and gives you potential places to look for employment."

DEP plans for the future

Agency wants to find best ways to deal with retirement

By Colleen O'Neill

It seems like everyone is retiring. According to the Department of Environmental Protection's Human Resources, DEP is in for a major climate change.

"DEP currently has 123 employees eligible to retire," said Melinda Campbell, an administrative services manager with Human Resources.

Dealing with this impending personnel shift is one of her job responsibilities.

"In the next three years, 78 more people will be eligible for retirement and 73 more will be eligible within the two-year period after that," Campbell said.

"Fewer than half of DEP's employees have greater than 10 years until retirement eligibility."

On June 9, an executive meeting for DEP upper management took place at the Charleston headquarters. The idea of succession planning was discussed.

Campbell and Debbie Hughes, also an admin-

"In the next three years, 78 more people will be eligible for retirement and 73 more will be eligible within the two-year period after that."



— Melinda Campbell

istrative services manager with Human Resources and charged with working with Campbell in dealing with retirement issues, orchestrated and conducted the meeting.

They were joined by Evelyn Davis, assistant director for organization and human resources development for the state Division of Personnel.

Succession planning deals with qualified employees retiring and remaining employees successfully stepping in to fill the void.

Campbell summarized future actions needed to be taken by DEP. She said the agency needs to:

- Prepare current employees to undertake key roles.
- Develop talent and long-term growth.
- Improve workforce capabilities and overall performance.
- Improve employee commitment and there-

fore employee retention.

- Meet the career development requirements of existing employees.
- Improve support to employees throughout their employment.
- Counter the increasing difficulty of recruiting employees externally.
- Focus on leadership continuity and improve knowledge sharing.
- Provide more effective monitoring and tracking of employee proficiency levels and skill gaps.

Davis discussed the current strategic planning initiatives that are ongoing within West Virginia state government.

She pointed out that succession planning and all work force planning must be tied into the state government strategic plan and the agency's strategic plan.

The strategic plan is the road map for the direction and focus of the agency and must be the driving force behind

all workforce and succession planning initiatives.

West Virginia was one of three states selected to partner with the Pew Center on the States in a year-long project to strengthen state operations and save tax dollars.

As part of this project, West Virginia is establishing a new statewide planning and budgeting system to ensure the best return on its state investments.

This includes statewide strategic planning and department-wide strategic planning. Part of this partnership is the production of the Governor's Vision 2012.

Also discussed at the June 9 executive meeting were a mentoring program, training opportunities, out-of-area assignments, knowledge retention and knowledge sharing programs, and simply finding ways to develop employees for future opportunities within DEP.

"This is a major crisis that scares me," Campbell said.

"I know, though, DEP employees have what it takes to come out on top. It'll just take some hard work on all of our parts, but I know we can do it. Together, we can overcome most anything."

WATER

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and regional approaches to water resource management.

"Our hope is to give these folks some basic tools to use so they can do water management," said the DEP's Mike Stratton, who, along with co-workers Brian Carr, Wilma McKown and Jenny Todd, is designing West Virginia's Water Management Plan.

"In writing this State Water Management Plan, we have to have

local input," Stratton said.

He's hopeful the training sessions will help educate local stakeholders in water management so they can better participate in the state planning process.

The Water Management Plan is designed to take a detailed look at future water uses in West Virginia and potential problems associated with those uses.

Scheduled for completion in 2013, the Water Management Plan was part of a 2008 amend-

ment to the state Water Resources Protection and Management Act that was passed in 2004 by the West Virginia Legislature.

The first resource management workshop was conducted on May 25-26 in Beckley. The next two are slated for July 13-14 in Morgantown and Oct. 5-6 in Moorefield.

A date has not been set for the fourth workshop.

Each workshop is limited to 30 or 40 persons, depending on the location.

Stratton said the first event attracted close to 15 participants. There were four instructors from the ICPRB on hand.

"The ICPRB has been around for about 70 years, predominantly planning water use and management in the basin," Stratton said.

"They've got a wealth of experience doing exactly what we're going to ask everyone in the state to do."

For more information about the training sessions go to: www.potomacriver.org.

Junior Conservation Camp

‘I believe in its purpose’

By Tom Aluise

Jeff Mills missed the inaugural state Junior Conservation Camp back in 1981.

In 1982, the Division of Forestry employee signed on as a camp leader.

He was hooked.

This year marked the 30th anniversary of the Junior Conservation Camp and Mills has worked every camp but one since coming on board in 1982.

“I missed in 1995 because I was working on a special project,” Mills said from this year’s camp at Cedar Lakes in Jackson County.

The 63-year-old Doddridge County resident has been involved with the camp longer than anyone and doesn’t appear ready to call it quits anytime soon.

“I wasn’t a Boy Scout or in 4-H when I was a kid,” Mills said. “This isn’t something I would have liked as a kid. People ask me, ‘Why do you keep coming back?’ I keep coming back because I believe in its purpose.”



The Division of Forestry’s Jeff Mills has worked at all of the 30 state Junior Conservation Camps at Cedar Lakes but two.

“Maybe we can help some of these kids realize what they want to do with their lives. We can make a difference in their lives.”

At camp, Mills teaches a forestry class, helps with crafts and tells tall tales at campfire gatherings.

He said he can still relate to the kids, ages 11-14. When that ends, so will his time at camp.

“The camp is not about us,” Mills said. “It’s about the kids.”

Mills said he especially likes camp because it paints state regulators in a positive

light and shows their human side. Unlike the early days of camp when most of its leaders were volunteers from outside state government, the majority of leaders now come from the Department of Environmental Protection (the camp’s sponsor) and the Division of Natural Resources.

They’re some of the same law enforcement officers and inspectors the campers might interact with later in life under different circumstances.

At camp, however, they’re teaching the kids

things like hunter safety, canoeing, fishing techniques and geocaching.

“I think that’s what makes this camp so good,” Mills said.

Mills also praised Camp Director Diana Haid. She has continued the tradition of operating a well-organized week of activities.

“When I first started, it was organized better than anything I had ever seen,” Mills said. “And it’s still organized unbelievably well. Diana does an excellent job.”

In addition to Mills, other constants at camp have been its location — Cedar Lakes has hosted the event every year — its conservation theme and the kids. Mills said the camp was thinking “green” before it was popular.

“This camp has talked that from day one,” Mills said.

As for the kids ...

“My wife asked the other day how the kids have changed,” Mills said. “I think they’re the same. I don’t see that they’re worse. At least here.”

DEP KIDS SHARE THOUGHTS ON CAMP ...

Those camp hamburgers were ‘awesome’

By Megan Egnor

My experience at camp was awesome. I met a lot of new people. I made many new friends from all over West Virginia, including Charleston and Jackson County — one even lives in Florida. I was the only person there from Lincoln County. I would



Egnor

love to go back next year. I recommend this camp to other kids because it’s a chance to go outdoors and learn new things about the environment.

The most interesting thing about camp was learning about the environment. I enjoyed “Curby” the trash robot. The robot talked about recycling and how much

trash is dumped in a year.

My favorite thing about camp was geocaching because I got to go outside in the woods and use a GPS to track things. I found some caches that had paper stamps in them that we marked our cards with.

Some of the things I did at camp was hiking, hunter safety, where I got to shoot a gun, swimming, canoeing, and water studies with Megan Grose.

I planted some native plants and took part in a

litter sweep of trash that wasn’t even ours.

I learned that 80 percent of the trash that we have could be recycled. I don’t know if we can recycle at home because our trash company doesn’t take recycled stuff. I do plan on picking up trash.

I learned about oil spills in the lakes that kill ducks. I learned that you could get a job driving an ATV, a boat, and looking for people who disobey the laws.

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CAMP

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I learned that you could smash 300 cans and make it an inch thick. I did crafts and made a candle with hot wax.

The hamburgers were awesome. I liked the breadsticks, Italian chicken, ham, pudding, and cereal. We also got to sit around the campfire making S'mores, listening to tall tales and singing songs. I didn't like the vegetarian lasagna or the scrambled eggs.

I want to thank the people from DEP, Conservation Officers and Forestry who worked at the camp.

■ *Megan's father, Mike Egnor, works in the Division of Air Quality.*

Meeting new people was 'really cool'

By Joseph Wirts

Junior Conservation Camp 2010 was a really great camp.

I definitely want to go there next year. The different activities were canoeing, hunter safety,



Wirts

nature walk, forestry, first aid, native planting, swimming, archery, cooking for camping, and many others.

My favorites were hunter safety and canoeing. Hunter safety showed you how to properly handle a gun and we got to shoot 22 rifles. Canoeing was, well, canoeing. We learned about recycling, landfills, and how to conserve our environment.

The most interesting thing about the camp was our color groups.

Meeting new people was really cool. They helped me get through the camp because this was my first year. I did make many new friends over the five days at camp. I definitely recommend this camp for other kids ages 11-14 because this camp teaches you how to conserve our environment so that we can live for years and years to come.

■ *Joseph's father, John Wirts, works in the Division of Water and Waste Management.*

nature walk, forestry, first aid, native planting, swimming, archery, cooking

It's too bad camp doesn't last longer

By Allyson Kincaid

This was my second year attending the Junior Conservation Camp.

I really enjoyed meeting new people and making new friends. I also enjoyed hanging out a bunch



Kincaid

with old friends from last year. On the way to camp, I was getting text messages from people I met last year wondering when I was going to be there. They were already there. I was in a different lodge, but I actually had the same bunkmate as last year. I had the top bunk this year!

One of my favorite activities this year was shooting the 22 rifle. At first, I was scared of it kicking, but it didn't. It was hard to line the gun up to shoot the target, but somehow I was able to hit the

bull's-eye. It was really fun.

Cooking for camping was another activity that I really enjoyed.

We learned how to make these banana boat things where you cut open the banana with the peel still on it, and put treats like chocolate chips and marshmallows inside.

You cook it on the campfire for about five minutes. They were very yummy!

One of the most interesting things I learned about the environment was about landfills. I was amazed at the amount of trash put into landfills each month. It made me really want to do a better job recycling. I have told my parents we need to get a bigger recycling bin.

I would recommend this camp to others and I already have actually. I will definitely go back to camp next year and for as long as I can. I just wish it was for two weeks instead of one.

■ *Allyson's mother, Amy Halstead and stepfather, Lewis Halstead, work in the Division of Mining and Reclamation.*

Images from camp



Close to 200 kids from around West Virginia attended the Department of Environmental Protection's Junior Conservation Camp June 21-25 at Cedar Lakes in Jackson County. It was the 30th anniversary of the event.





Employees of the Month

Brad Blaine, out of the Fairmont office, and **Travis Cooper**, out of the Charleston office, were honored as the DEP's May and June Employees of the Month respectively.

Both Blaine (top photo) and Cooper (above) are pictured with Cabinet Secretary Randy Huffman.

► Blaine works with the DEP's Youth Environmental Program and is truly happy when the program is a success. He is passionate and committed to his work and is always willing to share new skills with others.

► Cooper is in charge of several of REAP's cleanup programs, including Make It Shine. He also coordinates the annual Earth Day celebration, in addition to his everyday office duties of taking complaints, developing education materials for REAP and assisting the PPOD managers.



Reward and Recognition

Larry Robertson, an environmental inspector out of Oak Hill, was honored with a Reward and Recognition certificate in June. In addition to his responsibilities with EE, Robertson routinely strives to improve various processes. He recently developed a Litter Control Officer Training program.

Interns gaining experience

By Colleen O'Neill

Being in the business world is good experience, a way to learn the ins and outs of working and how it differs from the classroom.

The Department of Environmental Protection is taking part in this learning endeavor by offering more than 35 internships in its various environmental offices.



Jarvis

"I like doing something different than what I'm used to doing in class," said Margaret Crow, 20, and a first-year intern with the Division of Air Quality.

Crow attends Appalachian State University in North Carolina, where she'll return in the fall as a sophomore.



Beaufort

Because her major is accounting, the question of applicability is raised concerning Crow's internship with DAQ.

"I do a lot of work in Excel, which is widely used in the business world," Crow said. "It helps working with different (computer) programs."



Sowards

Another intern, Chelsea Jarvis, 19, has found a way to exercise her major, while carrying out the designated tasks. She is an intern with the Division of Mining and Reclamation.

"I'm a biology major at West Virginia University, where I just finished my freshman year," Jarvis said.



Chadwick

"I work on the database and find reports. What I really enjoy is going out in the field with Dennis (Stottlemeyer). It's different from being in the office."

David Beaufort, 23, is a graduate student at Marshall University. Majoring in information systems, the work he does for DMR goes hand-in-hand with his area of study.

"I'm entering water sampling data, getting experience working with database," said Beaufort. "I work on design and storing the data."

"I attend Marshall University," said Whitney Sowards, a business management major, also interning at DMR.

Time is on her side, as she'll be a sophomore when she returns in the fall.

"They have me doing data entry, which is fine. I'm really not sure of what I want to do," Sowards said.

The interns learned of the Governor's Internship Program in a myriad of ways.

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INTERNS

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Some of the interns got word of the program through trusted people.

“A friend at Fairmont State told me about it,” said Chris Chadwick, 21, who’ll be a returning senior at Marshall University.

He is majoring in environmental science, with a minor in chemistry. He is interning with DAQ.

“I heard about it from my mom, who works for the state, in (DEP’s) Division of Water and



Burdette



Clarke



Schafer

Waste Management,” said Chad Burdette, 19, returning in the fall as a sophomore

at West Virginia State University. He is interning with DMR.

“It just worked out that I’m interning here.”

“A woman at church works for the state Division of Labor,” said Anna Clarke, 20, who’ll return as a junior at Brandeis University in Massachusetts. There, she is majoring in European Culture Studies, with an emphasis on pre-medical studies. She is interning with the Division of Land Restoration in its Rehabilitation Environmental Action Plan program. “The woman at church told me about

the program.”

Still, others heard about it through the electronic media.

“I was looking on the Internet for internships, and I saw the listing for the Governor’s Internship Program,” said Corey Schafer, 23, a recent Marshall grad.

A computer science major, he is entering permit data into EQUIS, the environmental quality information system, for DMR. “I am writing code, which helps with the program.”

AML

Continued from Page 1

“We wanted to find the kids because we were hoping they would lead us to the mine openings,” Coberly said.



Coberly

“We also wanted to educate them on the dangers of exploring abandoned mines. No

one was looking to prosecute anyone for trespassing. We just wanted to make sure people stayed out of the mine.”

Hoping to quickly seal off the portals, AML personnel hit a dead end on their first visit to Raleigh County on June 2. Coberly even contacted Independence High School but didn’t have any luck in his efforts to track down the boys.

A second trip to the Abney area on June 7 proved fruitful. Coberly



The portals were once part of the old Big Stick Mine, owned by Lillybrook Coal. The mine ceased operations in the 1960s.

and his staff were able to locate the mine openings in what was once Lillybrook Coal’s Big Stick Mine. It was shut down in the 1960s.

“We looked for four-wheeler trails and high traffic areas that might lead us to the portals,” Coberly said. “We talked to a guy who knew about the portals but thought they might have been backfilled. We parked our vehicle and walked

about two miles. It turned out the portals were about 100 yards from where we parked. We recognized them right away.”

AML obtained permission for an emergency project and sealed off the portals on June 14. “This could have ended up a totally different story,” Coberly said.

All sorts of dangers lurk in abandoned underground mines, in-

cluding issues with breathable air, roof falls and explosive gasses.

“You might be able to go in there and fool around 10 times without anyone getting hurt,” Coberly said. “Then, the next time you go in there you have an oxygen deficient environment and you don’t come back out.”

Underground mines also have tripping hazards. And it’s easy to become disoriented in the dark environment.

Coberly said throughout the state there are probably over a thousand abandoned mine portals in varying stages of accessibility to the public. Some are sealed, some aren’t.

“As we find out they’re out there, we try to take care of them,” he said. “We’re sealing off portals on a constant basis.”

“There are a lot of portals out there that aren’t highly visible. When kids and adults alike stumble on them, they are curious.”

Ohio River cleanup attracts crowd

By Colleen O’Neill

Some TLC was given to the Ohio River.

On June 19, people all along the Ohio River, in each of the 12 West Virginia counties touched by the river, worked to clean it up.

The cleanup was sponsored by the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission.

Each of the 12 West Virginia counties had a site.

The counties were Brooke, Cabell, Hancock, Jackson, Marshall, Mason, Ohio, Pleasants, Tyler, Wetzel, Wayne, and Wood.

There were 374 volunteers, who picked up 9.4 tons of debris and 25 tires, said Travis Cooper, coordinator of the DEP’s Make-It-Shine cleanup program.

New Additions

Recent DEP hires

- Bethany Belding, OA
- Lamonta Benson, DLR
- Lawrence Harbrecht, DMR
- Fred Legg, DMR
- Barbara Mays, OA
- Teresa Miller, DMR
- Paul Pichardo, OLS
- Joseph Williams, DMR

DEP June retirements

David Idleman

Division of Mining and Reclamation

Last day: June 30, 2010

Years of service: 35

Gary Scites

Office of Oil and Gas

Last day: June 30, 2010

Years of service: 8



Franci Engle

Office of Administration/Fiscal Services

Last Day: June 30, 2010

Years of service: 27

Engle says: After 27-plus years of service to the State of West Virginia, I have decided to retire on June 30, 2010. It's an easy thing to say "I'm retiring," but the decision is a really hard decision to make. I wondered how I would spend my time, how I would pay my bills, how I would be able to care for my 83-year-old mother, and what about all my friends? Questions I didn't have answers to because you take for granted that you'll work forever. I never imagined myself retired. I've worked since I was 18. Then one day you just decide it's time. I can't explain it. You just know it's the right decision.

I began working for the Department of Highways in 1968 after two years with the Kanawha County Board of Education. I didn't intend to stay with DOH very long — maybe six months. But after nine years and 10 months, I decided I needed to further my education. So I left to attend college full time.

After graduation, I began working for Volkswagen of America in South Charleston. Volkswagen was a great place to work, but after seven years, the headquarters in Germany decided to move its North American Operations to Mexico. Now I was out of a job again! So ... I went *back* to school. After graduation, I decided to return to state government.

Enter DEP! I was hired by Linda Grbac in 1992 as an accountant in Fiscal Services. Linda had lost several accountants to other job opportunities and needed to fill those positions as soon as she could. We've always laughed about me telling her she didn't hire me because of my abilities she just needed a warm body. After two-and-a-half years in Fiscal, I was offered a job in the AML Program.

I was thrilled to get the job. I got a raise, I got my own office, and I thought I knew everything there was to know about AML. After all, I had been doing their grants for over two years. What else was there?

When I actually moved to my third-floor office in Nitro, I was amazed. You could barely see the floor for the piles and piles of documents that had accumulated. It had been five months since Eva Bevino retired and I moved upstairs. I asked Sherry Hale where all the paperwork came from and she told me I was getting reports from the field offices. I started going through the stacks

and didn't recognize anything. It didn't take me long to figure out I had a lot to learn about the AML Program. I have to give credit to the AML managers and staff for their patience and cooperation. I couldn't have done it without them.

In the fall of 2007 I was told that I was being transferred back to Fiscal Services. By this time, I had been the grants manager in AML for 12 years and I loved my work. When I moved to Fiscal most of my AML work came with me. After a few weeks, I was asked to take on new responsibilities including the UST Insurance Fund for Waste Management, and the In-Lieu-of-Mitigation Process for Water Resources.

In my 27-plus years in state government, I have formed lifelong friendships, many of those at DEP. It is with mixed emotion that I leave the program work that I have truly enjoyed, and the friendships that mean so very much to me. Thanks to everyone for making those years the most enjoyable years of my life. I will never forget you.

On the future: As for how I'm going to spend my retirement, well, my mother is 83 and needs constant care. She will always be my first priority. I really love to go out on the patio early in the morning with a cup of hot tea and watch the birds come to the feeder for breakfast.

I also love to play with my two shelties and take long walks through the woods. I enjoy working in my flower beds and sewing when I have the time. I've just started a memory quilt for my mother and hope to have it finished by her birthday in September.

Since my husband and I have always loved the beach, we're talking about spending the winter months in Florida — maybe Daytona Beach. That's my favorite.



Alvan Gale

Division of Water and Waste Management

Last Day: June 30, 2010

Years of service: 33

Gale says: It's hard to believe that 15 years have passed since I left my career in State Parks to take on one of the best jobs I ever had, coordinator of the state Save Our Streams Program in DEP. While exhausting, that job took me all over the state and I met many great people who cared deeply about their streams and the quality of life that living in West Virginia provides.

Eventually I moved into the Non-Point Source Program and I am still working with many of those same people, along with others I've met along the way. Leaving those relationships will be the hardest part about retiring.

There are a lot of memories I have about my years at DEP. Certainly, being caught in the Greenbrier Street flood will remain with me. Trapped in the office watching the FedEx truck float downstream and then watching it on the national news was exciting, although I admit I

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Students from Russia, Pakistan learn on job

By Colleen O'Neill

Education knows no boundaries. Especially the physical kind.

Rashid Nisar lives in South Charleston, but he is from Pakistan. Natalia Meshcheryakova resides in Huntington, but she is from Russia.

"I went back (to school) because I needed a degree," said Nisar, who is interning with the Division of Mining and Reclamation. A returning student at Marshall University, he will be a sophomore, majoring in geography. Nisar is 38.

"I'm taking in the new experience," said Meshcheryakova, 32. She can be found interning with the Division of Air Quality.

Also a returning student at Marshall, she is a senior and is majoring in engineering of transportation and infrastructure.

Two of more than three million returning students, Nisar and Meshcheryakova have joined the academic world to better themselves.

"I worked in the post office, at Sam's Club, at Lowe's," Nisar said. "They're all right for tempo-



Nisar



Meshcheryakova

rary jobs, but you can't live on them. They might have benefits if you stayed there, but it's minimum wage."

Meshcheryakova thought that going to college and getting a degree would broaden her horizons.

"This is my first year in this Government Internship Program," Meshcheryakova said. "The experience that I am getting here, I hope will be very helpful in my future.

"Because I work with Title V permits right now, I understand more about the kind of organizations that can be potential emissions sources. And which emissions they can produce.

"Field trips show how those tests should be performed. Having this experience, the work with Title V permits is easy because I have imagination about facilities."

Corporate Cup schedule

Saturday, July 10
9 a.m. — Softball Tournament, Kanawha City and King Center; 2 p.m. — Horseshoe Tournament, North Charleston Rec Center.

Sunday, July 11
9 a.m. — Softball Tournament, Kanawha City and King Center.

Tuesday, July 13
5:30 p.m. — Schultzie's Billiards Tournament.

Wednesday, July 14
5:30 p.m. — Venture Lanes Bowling Tournament.

Thursday, July 15
8 p.m. — Putt Putt golf, The Grand Prix.

Sunday, July 18
9 a.m. — Volleyball Tournament, Charleston YMCA; 9 a.m. — Tennis Tournament, YMCA

Monday, July 19
5:30 p.m. — Rose's Darts Tournament

Tuesday, July 20
7:30 p.m. — Hoop Shoot, YMCA.

Wednesday, July 21
7:30 p.m. — Closest to the Pin, Coonskin Park; 7:30 p.m. — Table Tennis Tournament, North Charleston Rec Center.

Thursday, July 22
5:30 p.m. — Cornhole
7 p.m. — Combined Age Swim Medley; 7:45 p.m. — Medley Swim Relay.

Saturday, July 24, at UC Stadium
8:30 a.m. — Track and field events. Tug of War.

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was more concerned about my new Ford Explorer floating away. But probably the most vivid memories will be the teams of people I worked with going around the state in public meetings talking about TMDLs and Tier 2.5. The meetings were often contentious, sometimes threatening. But after we made our escape, we managed to find a way to laugh it off and keep going.

On the future: After June 30, I will still be involved part time because our grants are due and the Program must go on. But, my wife and I plan to decompress for a while before going on to our next adventure.

I'll be working on our property on the Greenbrier River near Marlinton and eventually she will continue her pursuit of an advanced degree in pharmacy from the University of Florida. Who knows where we will end up? There is apprehension, but it is outweighed by the anticipation of something new.

Most of the people I've worked with over the years are not just my co-workers, they are my friends as well. We struggle so hard to mitigate the impacts of progress and maintain the quality of life that makes West Virginia "Wild and Wonderful." The bonds you make with people during that struggle are hard to break. Hopefully they won't.



Margaret Miller

Division of Mining and Reclamation

Last Day: June 16, 2010

Years of service: 20

Miller says: I would just like to say that I have thoroughly enjoyed meeting and working with

some of the nicest, hardest-working and knowledgeable people in the state.

The part of my job that I enjoyed most was learning something new every day. Protecting the environment is not an easy task because there are so many variables, whether you are talking about air, water, soil, critters, or people. No situation is ever exactly like the last one you dealt with. It makes you think constantly and there is no room for complacency.

I would like to thank my co-workers in Mining and Reclamation for always being so generous with their knowledge and their helpful attitudes. I will miss working with them, but intend to keep in touch.

On the future: Now I plan to spend more time with my family making new, and sharing old memories.