



Happy New Year!

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Sec. Huffman Discusses DEP's Role in Justice's Term

Outgoing cabinet secretary sees DEP playing key role in strengthening economy

by Jake Glance

Outgoing West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (WVDEP) Cabinet Secretary Randy C. Huffman believes this agency plays a key role in strengthening the state's economy and addressing major budget shortfalls.

Huffman's final day at WVDEP is Jan. 13. He will be leaving to take a full-time position with the West Virginia Air National Guard as a vice wing commander with the 130th Airlift Wing.



Gov.-Elect Jim Justice



Sec. Randy C. Huffman

"It has been a tremendous honor to serve the people of West Virginia for the past 30 years. I came to DEP looking for a job and found a purpose. I have made many friends over the years and have learned that no matter our differences we share a common goal of making West Virginia a better place," Huffman said. **See HUFFMAN, Page 6**

Elk Make Long Awaited Return to West Virginia

After more than 140-year absence, elk again roaming state's mountains

by Jake Glance

The last confirmed sighting of a native elk in West Virginia was in 1875 in Webster County.

The elk that will be seen near the Logan and Mingo County border may not be native, but the herd that was unveiled to the public at the Earl Ray Tomblin Wildlife Management Area in Logan County on Dec. 19 wasn't any less awe inspiring.

The 24 elk that were released - 12 males and 12 females - all captured in Kentucky, are part of the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources Elk Reintroduction Program.

Part of the area the elk will inhabit is the reclaimed Alex North surface coal mine near Holden, which completed grading and revegetation in 2011.

The reintroduction was years in



Photo courtesy Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin's Office

On Dec. 19, the first 24 members of the elk reintroduction plan were displayed for the media and curious onlookers. Eventually, more than 50 additional elk will be released into the wild in southern West Virginia, marking the elk's return to the state after a 140-year absence.

the making and involved several groups including the Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, the Conservation Fund, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

"If you drive around the state there's Elk creeks and Elk rivers. There used to be a huge population in West Virginia," said Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin.

See ELK, Page 6

DEP Field Office Completes Move to New Building in Fayette Co.

by Jake Glance

The WVDEP's field office in Fayette County will begin 2017 in a new building.

The new field office is located at 1159 Nick Rahall Greenway in Fayetteville. The old location was at 254 Industrial Drive in Oak Hill. The new field office is located almost exactly equal distance from downtown Oak Hill and Fayetteville.

The 102 employees of the field office will be members of several WVDEP divisions including DMR, AML, DLR's OSR and OER, DWWM's EE unit, and PIO.

It is believed WVDEP had been in the previous location since before it became an independent state agency.

Pictures of the construction of the WVDEP field office can be seen on page 5 of this issue of inDEPth.

AML Group Working To Fight Underground Mine Fire in Preston County

Lack of mine maps slowing effort

by Jake Glance

Putting out an underground mine fire is difficult enough, even if you know exactly what the mine shafts under your feet look like.

But the fire burning in an abandoned mine near Brocum Run in Preston County is going to be a tough one to tackle, because no mine maps can be located.

"If we had mine maps, we'd have some ideas as to what direction the fire may travel and it would absolutely help out with our abatement plan if we knew where the passages within the mine complex existed," said Rob Rice, chief of the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Office of Abandoned Mine Lands and Reclamation (AML).

This is the third major fire AML has had to address in less than two years. Fires in Boone and Marion counties, as with this fire in Preston County, meant the federal Office of Surface Mining (OSM) allowed the DEP to use emergency procedures to address the problem.

"OSM doesn't normally allow us to include fires in the inventory and that's because of the costs associated

with abating them," Rice said.

"Right now, the state has almost one billion dollars' worth of mine-related fires that we know of which are not included in the national abandoned mine land inventory. Only when a fire becomes problematic enough to where you have a structure or citizens that are at risk will OSM allow us to fund that particular project."

There are a handful of houses located close to the fire - so close, in fact, that DEP handed out free carbon monoxide detectors to the people living there out of an abundance of caution.

AML employees are trying to determine just how big the fire is, but they know for sure that temperatures in the burning areas are well over 1,000 degrees. The fire is estimated to span about five acres, all about 80 feet underground, and has damaged about 14 acres at the surface due to venting and heat migration.

The first phase of fighting the fire is to close off openings in the ground that allow the fire to pull in air, which keeps the blaze burning.

The fill material to close off these openings would be taken from cutoff

trenches dug to prevent the fire from migrating into workings that haven't burned yet.

Water cannot be used to extinguish the fire while the burning material is still underground. Pouring water into the ground would likely result in steam geysers that could seriously injure those working to put out the fire. Water could be used later, however. If the burning material is excavated, water would be used on it then, when it is laid out in a thin layer on top of the ground.

The first phase of the project will cost more than \$200,000. The estimated cost for the entire project is still being evaluated, and is heavily dependent on what AML decides to do in subsequent phases.

"We have to look at our budget because it's been cut drastically over the last five years," Rice said. "This is going to be a budgetary problem for our office. We know it's going to be a multi-million dollar project."

For more on the Brocum Run fire, check out the next edition of the [DEP's TV show, "Environment Matters."](#)



Aluise Honored by Putnam Co. Solid Waste Authority

by Colleen O'Neill

For Tom Aluise, protecting the environment is more than just a job.

On Dec. 12, the district coordinator for the DEP's Youth Environmental Program (YEP) was honored by the Putnam County Solid Waste Authority (SWA).

Aluise received the Gary Persinger Annual Environmental Award for his commitment to the county and the SWA.



Tom Aluise

The award is named in memory of a longtime member of the SWA.

"Tom is dedicated to Putnam County and our solid waste authority," said Charity Fellure, executive director of the SWA.

"Tom comes to as many of our meetings as he possibly can," Fellure said. "He volunteers his time to help at our events. He is very active in our county. Everyone speaks very highly of him when they find out that we work together on projects. We are so thankful for all that he does for Putnam County."

Aluise was unable to attend the SWA's awards dinner, but a DEP co-worker brought him the news and the plaque. He was both surprised and humbled by the honor.

"From the beginning, the Putnam County Solid Waste Authority made me feel very welcome at its meetings," Aluise said. "It didn't take long to realize they were a dedicated bunch, who had a genuine concern for their community and the environment. Because of their strong commitment to the citizens of the county, it was easy for me to want to help in any way I could."

Aluise attends the SWA meetings to learn about upcoming events in the county, especially those involving schools, 4-H clubs and other youth groups who could potentially benefit from resources offered by YEP.

See **ALUISE**, Page 4



Smoke from the Brocum Run underground mine fire in Preston County rises from a crack in the ground on Dec. 6. Inspectors from the DEP's Office of Abandoned Mine Lands and Reclamation and the federal Office of Surface Mining surveyed the site and are currently working on a plan to put the fire out.

Santa Visits DEP's Energy Tree Lighting



Santa Claus, the jolly old elf himself, visited the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection's Energy Tree lighting reception in Kanawha City on Dec. 16. The event featured displays that focused on protecting the environment as well as energy savings during the holidays. According to Christmaslightsetc.com, a house using 265 feet of incandescent lights in a display would cost approximately \$52 and use 1,925 total watts of electricity. On the other hand, 265 feet of LED lights would require only 38 watts of electricity and cost just over \$1.

USMC Reserves Thanks DEP for Toys for Tots Donations

by Jake Glance

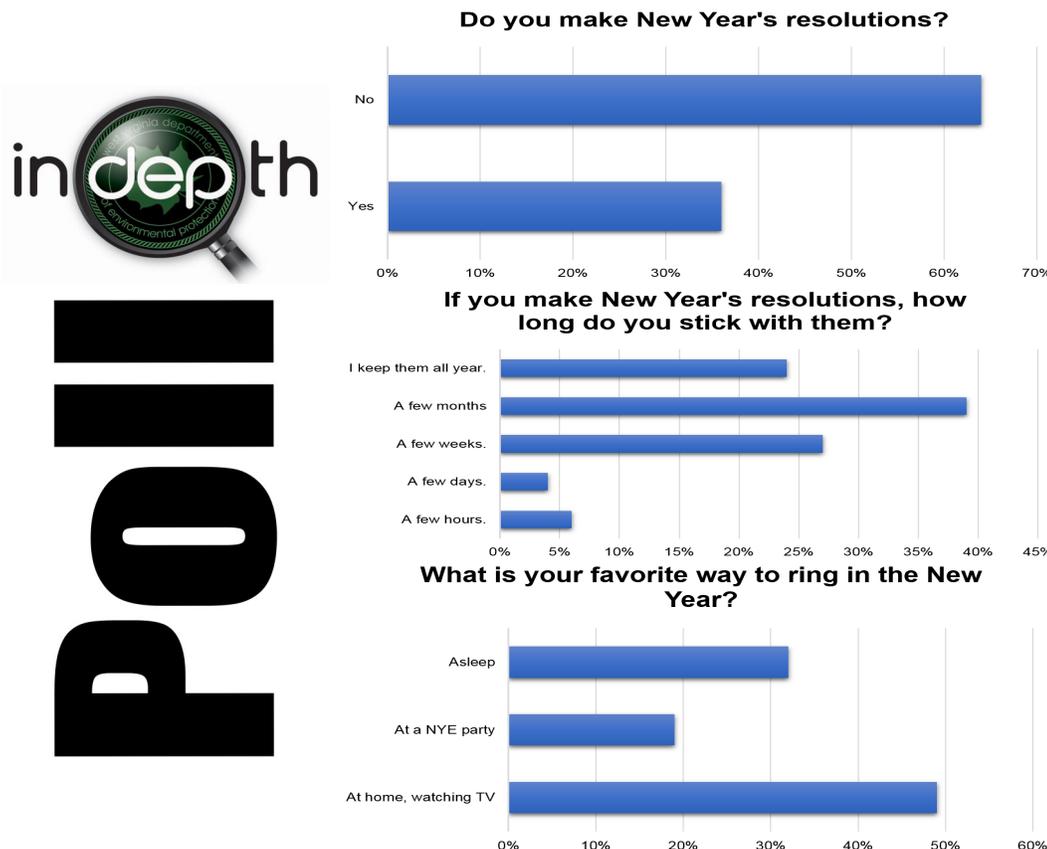
Here's something to warm your heart during the frigid winter months.

The West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection has received the Commander's Award "for outstanding support of the 2016 Marine Toys for Tots Program."

The proclamation also thanks the DEP for "generous contributions" that have "enabled the Marine Corps to bring the joy of Christmas and send a message of hope to America's less fortunate children."

The proclamation is signed by Lt. Gen. Steven A. Hummer, commander of the Marine Forces Reserves.

The USMC Reserve Toys for Tots program was founded in 1947 and became a nationwide effort in 1948. The famous Toys for Tots logo was designed by Walt Disney Studios. First Lady Michelle Obama placed the first donation box at the White House in 2009.



inDepth

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DEP Presents Recycling Grants

28 organizations
split \$1.8 million
in grant funding

by Jake Glance

West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (WVDEP) Cabinet Secretary Randy C. Huffman presented nearly \$2 million in grant funding on Dec. 6 for recycling programs across the state.

The \$1.8 million was distributed to 28 groups, and will fund initiatives ranging from the purchase of forklifts and scales to helping pay for advertising and educational outreach programs.

The funding comes from the DEP's Rehabilitation Environmental Action Plan (REAP) Recycling Assistance Program.

Funding for the program is generated through the \$1 assessment fee per ton of solid waste disposed at in-state landfills and is provided by West Virginia Code 22-15A-19(h) (1). Since the program's inception 25 years ago, REAP has awarded nearly \$40 million to various organizations across the state. The recipients of this year's awards are:

Berkeley County:

The Berkeley County Solid Waste Authority received \$89,350 to assist with the purchase of a skid loader, forklift, scale systems, and a single stream roll-off container for the county-wide program.

Cabell County:

The Cabell County Solid Waste Authority received \$147,652 to assist with wages, fuel, maintenance, purchase of recycling trailers, vertical balers, a forklift, pallet jacks, floor scales, operational supplies, utilities, and public outreach for the county-wide program.

Goodwill Industries of KYOWVA Area received \$72,228.84 to assist with the purchase of a vertical baler, bulk delivery trucks, cube trucks, operational supplies, fuel, educational conference attendance, and truck wraps for the ongoing operation.

Metal Center Recycling received \$14,931.07 to assist with the purchase of a forklift and self-dumping hoppers for the ongoing operation.

Mountain Pride Recycling received \$40,000 to assist with the purchase of a skid steer for the recycling operation.



Cabinet Secretary Randy C. Huffman presented recycling grants to groups from 19 counties on Dec. 6 during a ceremony at DEP headquarters.

Jackson County:

The Jackson County Solid Waste Authority received \$97,483.86 to assist with personnel costs, insulated garage doors, vehicle fuel and repairs, equipment tires and maintenance, utilities, operational supplies, collection bins, cardboard collection shelter and gravel for the county-wide program.

Jefferson County:

The Jefferson County Solid Waste Authority received \$74,194 to assist with trommel screen maintenance and yard waste grinding expenses for the county-wide program.

Kanawha County:

The Recycling Coalition of West Virginia received \$49,500 to assist with a West Virginia Recycles Day educational insert and advertising.

The West Virginia State University Research and Development Corp. received \$28,883.90 to assist with the purchase of a vertical baler, three-phase electric, and utility vehicle to transport materials for the campus-wide recycling program.

Lincoln County:

The Lincoln County Solid Waste Authority received \$23,100 to assist with recycling bin pulls, personnel costs, educational conference attendance, and advertisement for the county-wide program.

McDowell County:

Urps Metal Company received \$17,768 to assist with the purchase of torching supplies, repairs and improvements to the warehouse and yard, and scrap metal purchase ticket books for the ongoing operation.

Mercer County:

The city of Bluefield received \$19,500 to assist with wages, fuel, vehicle expenses, purchase of recycling bags, office supplies and other opera-

tional supplies for the city-wide program.

Lusk Disposal Service received \$75,000 to assist with the purchase of recycling bins for the ongoing cardboard recycling operation.

The Mercer County Commission received \$97,58 to assist with personnel costs, educational conference attendance, purchase of a recycling truck, trailers, recycling stations and liners, advertising, truck fuel and maintenance, and printing costs for flyers for its county-wide program.

The Mercer County Solid Waste Authority received \$124,640 to assist with the purchase of a horizontal baler and conveyor system and wages for the county-wide program.

Monongalia County:

PACE Enterprises of West Virginia received \$69,840 to assist with wages and employer taxes, vehicle expenses and the purchase of office and operational supplies.

Morgan County:

The Morgan County Solid Waste Authority received \$17,580 to assist with personnel costs, POD rental for storage, event expenses, advertising and educational brochures for the ongoing county-wide program.

Nicholas County:

The Nicholas County Solid Waste Authority received \$60,160 to assist with construction of a storage building and to purchase a skid steer for the county-wide program.

Pendleton County:

North Fork Disposal received \$53,999.71 to assist with electric and facility upgrades, storage, and the purchase of a forklift, baler, pallet jack and scales for the recycling operation.

ALUISE

Con't from Page 2

At the meetings, Aluise also attempts to keep the solid waste authority informed of any DEP-related issues that could affect it, as well as volunteer to find answers to questions the group might have.

"One of my favorite events this past year was the Great Kanawha River Cleanup," Aluise said. "Charity and I helped coordinate a cleanup on Winfield Beach, near the Winfield Locks and Dam. Even though it was scheduled for an early Saturday morning in September, we had a tremendous turnout of students from both Winfield and Buffalo high schools. It was certainly inspiring to see so many young people come out. I'm thinking we picked up nearly 50 bags of trash that day."

Aluise also helped recognize one of Buffalo High School's most outstanding students.

"Back in May, I was honored to attend Buffalo High School's awards ceremony and present the YEP's \$10,000 college scholarship to senior Megan Parsons," he said.

"I've also made stops at Hometown Elementary in Putnam County to read to the younger students and teach the older students about the importance of recycling," Aluise said. "It was a great thrill when Hometown won an Environmental Award from the DEP for its focus on the environment."

Bring your real
Christmas tree to
Capitol Market on
Jan. 7 from 10
a.m. to 2 p.m. so it
can be
recycled into fish
habitat!

Make sure you
remove all lights
and decorations
before you
drop them
off!

Thanks!



See GRANTS, Page 6

Fayette Co. Field Office Takes Shape



Congrats to Employees of the Month, Rewards & Recognition Award Winners!

Jackie Thornton has been described as well respected and admired by her co-workers. She has been the driving force in her office behind many projects that had previously come to a standstill. She is an inspector, a water well specialist, a supervisor, and an equipment manager. She assists inspectors in the field, as well as staff in the office, and many times acts as a liaison between the two. For these reasons, Thornton was selected as the agency's Employee of the Month for July 2016.



Melanie Hankins was hired by the Office of Oil and Gas in 2014 during a significant increase in well work activity, due to the onset of horizontal drilling activity. She continually assists with requests outside of her normal duties. She serves on the Responsible Party cleanup team and is the official Application Xtender trainer for OOG. She recently accepted a new position within the office. For these reasons, Hankins was selected as DEP's October 2016 Employee of the Month.



Jeremiah Johnson was recently asked to serve the agency in an area outside his job duties and responsibilities. This past September, and for the first time, DEP hosted the Environmental Council of the States national meeting in Wheeling. One area of responsibility the DEP was charged with was technical support. Johnson was asked to provide these services and he took on the challenge without hesitation. For his outstanding work, Johnson was given a Rewards and Recognition Award.



Leslie Oaks has taken the lead to bring Application Xtender to the Division of Mining and Reclamation. She made sure the standard operating procedure (SOP) was developed and that staff has adequate training to be successful with the new process. Her helpfulness shines when working with field offices. She is always going above and beyond to help with any issues her colleagues may be having. For these reasons, Leslie Oaks was presented with a Rewards and Recognition Award.



ELK

Con't from Page 1

"This has been a project people have worked on for the last five to 10 years and talked about. Today we are obviously celebrating," Gov. Tomblin added.

Approximately 200 people attended the unveiling ceremony - including several people who allowed their children to miss a day of school to see the

elk meander around their holding pen, 200 yards from where the public had gathered to watch.

Before coming to West Virginia, the elk were tested for diseases at the Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area in eastern Kentucky. They were brought to West Virginia on Dec. 16.

The elk are currently being held in a large pen under constant supervision. Soon, the pen's door will be opened and the elk will be allowed to roam all

over the wildlife management area, which stretches across the Mingo County line.

The elk reintroduction plan calls for a total of 75 elk to be released in West Virginia.



A crowd of more than 200 was on hand to witness the first elk herd in West Virginia in more than 140 years.

HUFFMAN

Con't from Page 1

"I am excited about the opportunity to further my military career and public service with the West Virginia Air National Guard. Because of the unique relationship that exists between the Guard and our state, I will be able to use my skills and experience to continue serving our people. I have been blessed to watch Governors Manchin and Tomblin up close as they worked selflessly in the best interests of West Virginia. I learned a great deal from both of them and am forever grateful for their leadership."

"I also believe Jim Justice will serve our state well as governor and am looking forward to helping him from this new perspective as he works to take

us to the next level."

Huffman said job creation, a sound budget, and environmental protection are linked - not mutually exclusive where the pursuit of one means the sacrifice of the others.

Huffman said he sees the WVDEP's role as working with companies who have plans to open factories or create jobs in order to build a stronger tax base - meaning a more robust economy that won't require tax increases or program cuts to balance the state's budget.

"You don't lose an ounce of environmental protection by doing it that way," Huffman said.

"Just because you approach it from the standpoint of, 'I want to help this company get this business going so they can employ 500 people at \$80,000 a year.' We can have that attitude and

still believe that the environment is not going to be degraded."

Huffman said he expects the Justice Administration to aggressively pursue businesses, attempting to get them to locate facilities in West Virginia.

And, he said, those businesses will almost always have to come through the WVDEP to get some sort of permit - whether it is an air quality permit, a stormwater construction permit, or something else.

Huffman said he believes continued close cooperation with potential new industry is more beneficial to all those involved, because if the potential new industry meets all of the specifications laid out in code, it will obtain the requested permits. Throwing up roadblocks needlessly or refusing to work with them doesn't encourage invest-

ment in West Virginia, Huffman said.

"Why make potential investors feel unwelcome, make them spend a lot of money, make them spend a lot of time, when it does not change the outcome in any way, shape, or form?"

The bottom line is that no business will receive any type of permit from WVDEP if it does not meet the requirements of state and federal law, Huffman said. But, he added, there is a duty to work with these potential businesses to help them make the necessary changes so they can operate in West Virginia without harming the environment.

"I think the environmental agency has as much, or even more, of a role of being able to attract businesses or making them feel welcome than any other entity in government."

GRANTS

Con't from Page 4

Preston County:

The town of Terra Alta received \$24,350 to assist with the purchase of a box truck, fuel, bale ties and utilities for the city-wide program.

Raleigh County:

The Raleigh County Solid Waste Authority received \$150,000 to assist with the purchase of a roll-off truck, hoist and fuel for the county-wide program.

Ritchie County:

The Ritchie County Solid Waste Authority received \$20,105 to assist with vehicle and building maintenance, heater replacement, to purchase loading dock plate, forklift forks, utility trailers, fuel and advertising for the county-wide program.

Roane County:

The Roane County Commission received \$80,000 to assist with the purchase of a truck, yard ramp, forklift and recycling trailer for the county-wide recycling program.

The Roane County Solid Waste

Authority received \$126,200 to assist with the completion of a new recycling center, labor wages, vehicle and equipment maintenance, fuel and utilities for the county-wide program.

Wayne County:

The Wayne County Commission received \$92,441.82 to assist with the installation of a new ceiling and insulated doors to improve a building for the county-wide program.

The Wayne County Solid Waste Authority received \$19,474.16 to assist with personnel costs, fuel, utilities, maintenance, repairs and office supplies

for the county-wide program.

Wetzel County:

The Zanesville Welfare Organization and Goodwill Industries (which is based in Ohio but also serves Wetzel County) received \$72,240 to assist with the purchase of an electric forklift, horizontal baler and conveyor system.

Wood County:

The city of Parkersburg received \$98,000 to assist with the purchase of a skid loader, materials for storage containers, asphalt for road improvement and updates to its website for the city-wide program.



New Hires

Jason Deal, Division of Mining and Reclamation
Amaris Elliott, Division of Water and Waste Management
Roberta Jane Price, Division of Mining and Reclamation
John Scott, Division of Water and Waste Management
Ryan Thomas, Division of Mining and Reclamation

Recent/Upcoming Retirements

Greg Adolfsen, Public Information Office
Mark Foley, Division of Mining and Reclamation
Roger White, Abandoned Mine Lands
Tom Wood, Division of Mining and Reclamation