

Lead & Zinc Bench Street Opening Project
Jo Daviess County
Galena, Illinois

Nominated by: Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Office of Mines and Minerals
Division of Abandoned Mined Lands Reclamation
524 South Second Street
Lincoln Tower Plaza
Springfield, Illinois 62701
Phone Number: (217) 782-0588

Project Date: June 13, 2001 through January 24, 2002

Project Cost: \$69,956.99

Contractor: Renaissance Restoration, Inc.
P.O. Box 291
330 Spring Street
Galena, Illinois 61036

Consultant: Raymond Professional Group, Inc.
1001 16th Street
Moline, Illinois 61265

Date: March 11, 2002

The Lead & Zinc Bench Street Opening Reclamation Project is located within the heart of Galena, Illinois, in the northwest corner of the state. This region has a history of lead & zinc mining from the time the area was first settled by Europeans through the early 1970s. Thousands of shafts were sunk to depths of more than 200 feet while recovering these ores, and many were never filled or adequately sealed. This particular project pertains to one of several mine shafts that was dug into the limestone bluff along Bench Street sometime between 1820 and 1830. The names of the miners and/or mining operation that sunk these shafts nearly 200 years ago are not known.

There is a stately historic structure at the site of this reclamation project that was initially a private residence built by Daniel Barrows in 1858. Barrows, a Galena entrepreneur whose fortunes were made locally in the confectionary, distillery and lumber businesses, erected this 4,500-square-foot mansion directly in front of one of the old mine shafts. In 1922, the owners of the house, the Galena Odd Fellows Lodge, modified the structure by tearing down the rear wing of the building and replacing it with a large two-story hall. During the Great Depression, the City of Galena bought the mansion, and the structure became home to city government, as well as a newly formed Historical Society. City Hall moved out of the structure in 1967, at which time the Historical Society devoted the newly vacated space to an exhibit area depicting local history.

In the 1990s, the Illinois State Legislature, with the support of the Illinois Coal Association, enacted legislation that temporarily authorized the use of up to 2 percent of the state's annual AML Grant fund for the purposes of addressing non-coal, Priority One sites. As a result, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Office of Mines and Minerals, Division of Abandoned Mined Lands Reclamation was able to begin locating and sealing the numerous open adits and shafts that remained in the Galena area as a matter of public safety. During this process, Daryl Watson, executive director of the Galena/Jo Daviess County Historical Society and Museum, recognized the potential value in the open shaft that lay behind the museum. Watson approached the AML program with thoughts of preserving the shaft by converting it into an exhibit. He felt that this would add an educational component to the museum, which already housed a lead and zinc mining exhibit, and further preserve the history of mining in the region. Watson's ideas were well-received, and everyone agreed that a standard closure would not be appropriate.

The mine shaft itself has a 7.5-square-foot opening, which is larger than most from that era. The actual depth of the shaft could not be determined beyond 30 feet due to a large amount of rubble and debris that had been discarded there over the years. AML staff determined that the shaft posed an extreme danger to public safety based upon its close proximity to populated areas, evidence of frequent visitation and the fact that the opening had become obscured by vegetation growing along side the bluff.

The consulting firm, Raymond Professional Group, Inc., formerly Beling Engineers, was retained to design a method for preserving this mine opening in a manner that would allow for safe public viewing. The final design included stabilization of the stone walls surrounding each side of the shaft and construction of an enclosed viewing area, directly connected to the museum that would essentially house the shaft and allow for a lighted view down into the mine workings. A series of small, removable viewing panels would permit visitors to experience the damp, cooling nature of the venting process, which would eventually culminate through louvered features in the tower of the structure.

The first setback to the project occurred in 1999 when initial construction bids came in higher

than expected. The project was then placed in even greater jeopardy by the fact that the previously enacted 2 percent non-coal expenditure provision was due to sunset on August 31, 1999. In order for the project to continue, state legislation extending the deadline for obligating non-coal expenditures would have to once again be passed. This was accomplished, in large part, thanks to the efforts of State Representative Ron Lawfer, State Senator Todd Sieben, and Taylor Pensoneau, President of the Illinois Coal Association. As a result of the sponsorship and backing of these individuals and lobbying efforts by I.D.N.R.'s Office of Mines and Minerals, special legislation was passed authorizing the release of approximately \$26,000 in AML funds previously earmarked for reclaiming and abating safety hazards at this site. Subsequent lobbying efforts by the local legislators were successful in securing an additional \$44,000 for the project in the form of an Illinois First Grant. The City of Galena, owners of the property, asked to assist with the planning process and offered to have a city engineer serve as an on-site inspector responsible for ensuring quality construction and building code compliance. The end result was a unique partnership agreement that enabled the project to become a reality.

The project was bid in the spring of 2001, construction began that summer, and the project was completed as scheduled during the winter of 2002. The hazards pertaining to the mine shaft have been abated, the historical and educational values have been preserved for generations to come, and the local tourism industry now has a newly added attraction. The City of Galena (population 3,460) welcomes as many as 1.3 million tourists annually, and the Galeana/Jo Daviess Historical Society Museum receives an average of 14,000 visitors per year.

On February 21, 2002, a dedication of the completed project and mining exhibit was held with local dignitaries, and personnel from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and Office of Surface Mining participating.