



# OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING



## 2002 Annual Report

The Office of Surface Mining is a bureau of the U.S. Department of the Interior with responsibility, in cooperation with the states and Indian tribes, to protect citizens and the environment during coal mining and reclamation, and to reclaim mines abandoned before 1977.

# ABOUT THE OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING

The Office of Surface Mining is a small bureau (about 620 employees nationwide) of the U. S. Department of the Interior with responsibility, in cooperation with the states and Indian tribes, to protect citizens and the environment during coal mining and reclamation, and to reclaim mines abandoned before 1977. Under authority of the Surface Mining Law<sup>1</sup>, the Office of Surface Mining is organized around two principal requirements: regulating active coal mining and reclaiming abandoned mines. It is a field-oriented organization, with headquarters in Washington, D.C., three regional coordinating centers (in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Alton, Illinois; and Denver, Colorado), 10 field offices, and six area offices.

The current annual operating budget is approximately \$300 million<sup>2</sup>. That sum enables the Office of Surface Mining to support the states' mining programs by granting funds for their regulation and enforcement and providing training and technical support. It also pays 100 percent of the costs for restoring abandoned mines that were left unreclaimed before the Law was passed in 1977. Funds for reclaiming abandoned mines come from tonnage-based reclamation fees paid by America's active coal mine operators.

In addition, the Office of Surface Mining operates programs to: eliminate environmental and economic impacts of acid mine drainage from abandoned coal mines, encourage reforestation of reclaimed mine land, develop techniques that can ensure reclamation of prime farmland soils, and publicly recognize outstanding reclamation by communicating the experience to others.

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1. Public Law 95-87, Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA)

2. Not including payment to the United Mine Workers of America Combined Benefit Fund.

**Cover Photo:** Between 1986 and 1990 this 123-acre site located at the border of Tennessee and Kentucky was mined by a small coal operator (an operator mining less than 300,000 tons per year). Prior to mining, this site was covered with old spoil pits and ridges left from an abandoned 1940's coal mine. Today, with the bond released, this reclaimed mine site is typical East Tennessee pasture land with grazing cattle and abundant wildlife. The five-acre water impoundment provides an outstanding habitat for waterfowl and creates a very pleasant natural setting.

# INTRODUCTION

## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING COMBINED 2002 ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS AND FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

This report describes the operations of the Interior Department's Office of Surface Mining for the period October 1, 2001 through September 30, 2002 (Fiscal Year 2002)<sup>3</sup>.

**T**his Report was compiled to meet the specific requirements of Section 706 of the Surface Mining Law and Section 306 of the Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990, and includes a summary of results required by the Government Performance and Results Act. Included in the report are activities carried out under several parts of the Law: Title IV, Abandoned Mine Reclamation; Title V, Control of the Environmental Impacts of Surface Coal Mining; and Title VII, Administrative and Miscellaneous Provisions. Surface Mining Law responsibilities of other bureaus and agencies have been omitted because they are reported directly to Congress by the agencies responsible. Those responsibilities include Title III, State Mining and Mineral Resources and Research Institutes program, which was administered by the now abolished U.S. Bureau of Mines; Titles VIII and IX, the University Coal Research Laboratories and the Energy Resource Graduate Fellowships, which are administered by the Secretary of Energy; and Section 406, the Rural Abandoned Mine Program (RAMP) which is administered by the Secretary of Agriculture.

To allow comparison of statistics from year to year this report contains updated tabular data corresponding to that found in annual reports prepared since 1988. And, it is organized in sections that correspond to the two principal activities performed by the Office of Surface Mining in implementing the Surface Mining Law -- Abandoned Mine Land reclamation and regulation of active coal mines -- and two supporting activities -- technology development and transfer and financial management and administration.

Statistics in this report are presented in English units. To convert these numbers into metric units use the following conversion factors:

Miles x 1.609 = Kilometers  
Acres x 0.40469 = Hectares  
Feet x 0.30473 = Meters  
Gallons x 0.37854 = Liters  
Tons x 0.90718 = Metric Tons

Principal distribution of this report is in electronic format. It is available on the Office of Surface Mining web site ([www.osmre.gov/annualreport.htm](http://www.osmre.gov/annualreport.htm)) and CD-ROM. The CD contains all Office of Surface Mining Annual Reports (1978-2002), and a 15-minute video showing award winning reclamation. In addition, active web links to more detailed information are available when using the electronic version of the report. Printed copies of this Annual Report are also available and will be distributed to the public upon request.

For information about Office of Surface Mining activities, news releases, publications, or to request printed copies of this report, visit the Office of Surface Mining web site at [www.osmre.gov](http://www.osmre.gov) or contact:

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3. Throughout this document "2002" refers to Fiscal Year 2002 (10/1/01 - 9/30/02) unless otherwise noted.



# A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

## OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING DIRECTOR JEFFREY JARRETT REPORTS ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS ACHIEVED DURING THE PAST 25 YEARS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS



August 3, 2002, marked the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act. This special occasion served as the perfect opportunity to look at the past and marvel at how far we have come under this landmark piece of legislation. In the 1970's Congress recognized both the vital importance of coal in securing our nation's future and the needs of our citizens for a clean, safe, and healthy environment. In response, Congress passed the nation's first comprehensive mining and reclamation law and gave the Office of Surface Mining its assignment – strike a balance between our country's need for the energy produced by coal and the protection of our environment.

**T**oday, 25 years after the passage of the Surface Mining Law, land reclamation and environmental protection have become successful and routine parts of the coal mining process. In addition, mine sites abandoned prior to the passage of the Surface Mining Law have been cleaned up protecting the lives and health of millions of Americans living and working in the coal fields.

There have been many accomplishments under the Surface Mining Law – some very significant successes over the past 25 years include:

- More than 180,000 acres of abandoned coal mine sites have been reclaimed under the Abandoned Mine Land Program.

It's easy to question if this was ever a coal mine (left). At this Kentucky site the operator mined and reclaimed this small farm and within a short time it was returned to the premining land use without any environmental impact. Today, reclamation such as this is becoming common practice -- a distinct difference from the years before the Surface Mining Law was passed.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

- Serious threats to public health and safety at abandoned sites have been eliminated including the elimination of the hazards associated with more than 20,000 open mine portals and shafts, 2.5 million feet of dangerous highwalls, 1,000 dangerous water bodies, and 500 miles of clogged streams.
- Over 5.2 million acres of land were permitted and mined in compliance with the environmental protection standards of federal and state law, protecting land and water in the coal fields during mining.
- More than 23 billion tons of coal have been produced by the mining industry providing half of our nation's electricity and helping fuel our nation's leadership of the global economy.
- The mining industry has provided over \$6.5 billion to clean up mine sites abandoned before enactment of the Surface Mining Law.

Throughout this report we have provided photographs showing examples of reclamation that have been achieved over the entire 25-year period. These successes are what the architects of the Surface Mining Law envisioned 25 years ago and represent today's standard for coal mining throughout the country.

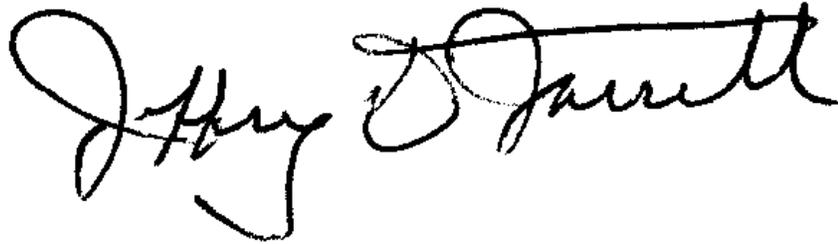
Although we have achieved substantial accomplishments over the past 25 years, there are still challenges that face us. The careful exploration of the available options and concerns surrounding the scheduled 2004 expiration of the Abandoned Mine Land Fee collection authority; determining how various agencies' policies, guidance and coordinated agency decision-making processes can minimize the adverse environmental effects from mountaintop mining operations; and finding acceptable solutions to issues related to the treatment of long-term pollutional discharges and acid mine drainage, are but a few of these challenges. While the solutions to these challenges are complex and diverse, the method in which the Office of Surface Mining will overcome them are not.

Secretary of the Department of the Interior, Gale A. Norton, is firmly committed to a process called the Four C's: consultation, cooperation, and communication - all in the service of conservation. We, at the Office of Surface Mining, embrace Secretary Norton's Four C's enthusiastically, seeing in the words a validation of our historic approach to our mission and a valuable articulation of the standard Office of Surface Mining staff strive to meet.

We invite you to take a look at our annual report and our program and see our commitment to the Four C's in action with our public, state, tribal, environmental group and industry stakeholders. Whether it is soliciting advice and ideas through an advanced notice of proposed rule-making; extensively participating in a multi-agency programmatic environmental impact statement; taking steps to ensure regulatory stability; working with regulatory authorities to set program performance measures; improving and expanding our clean streams programs and watershed cooperative agreements; delivering necessary and desired training and technical services; recognizing and rewarding regulatory authorities and operators that perform above and beyond what is required of them; or simply a field inspection or visit, the Four C's are at the heart of our everyday operations at the Office of Surface Mining.

Finally, as a government agency we have a responsibility to the public to operate in an efficient and effective manner. Under President Bush's leadership, we are focusing on becoming a results oriented agency by linking budget decisions to performance outcomes and striving to have the right people, in the right places doing the right things.

In conclusion I would like to commend all of our stakeholders and Office of Surface Mining employees on 25 years of success under the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act. I believe in the goals of this statute and I believe we can maintain a proper balance between protecting the environment and meeting the country's energy needs. Finally, I believe in this program and I am proud to be affiliated with the "Feds Who Get It," a title bestowed on the Office of Surface Mining by Governing Magazine. However, we at the Office of Surface Mining recognize that "getting it" is only half the battle – it is the vision of the Office of Surface Mining to become known as "Feds Who Get It Done!" We certainly welcome your help, comments, or suggestions for continued improvements towards achieving this goal.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jeffrey D. Jarrett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".