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Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) Presents 2014 ECHO Award to Veteran Environmental Activist

(Washington, DC) – A longtime environmental activist who has devoted more than two decades to eliminating coal mine related pollution from Appalachian watersheds is the winner of the [OSMRE 2014 ECHO Award](#).

On Wednesday, December 10, 2014, [OSMRE Director Joe Pizarchik](#) will present the 2014 ECHO Award to R. John Dawes, Executive Director of the [Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds](#). Dawes has served as Executive Director since 1994, overseeing more than 150 grants to environmental and watershed groups throughout Pennsylvania. The funds are distributed as seed grants to attract government and private money to address polluted waterways. The Foundation estimates that its funding has generated more than \$110 million of project work in the last two decades.

“I am honored to receive this award,” said Dawes, who is well-known throughout the Appalachian environmental community. “It is a testament to the hundreds of people who have contributed time, effort, and money to address the pollution left behind when coal mines have been abandoned. I am humbled that their efforts have led to this award, and I appreciate and honor them in turn.”

“I have known John for many years and can testify first-hand as to his effectiveness in working with people throughout business and government,” said Director Pizarchik. “This honor reflects the years of John’s tireless efforts, which should be an inspiration to others.”

OSMRE’s ECHO Award signifies the most common principles underlying the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA), namely, the **E**nvironment, **C**ommunity, **H**umanity and **O**wnership. The 2014 ECHO Award is the third to be awarded by OSMRE. In 2012, the bureau first began recognizing individuals for their contributions to support and strengthen SMCRA, the law enacted to protect people and the environment from the adverse effects of coal mining, while providing for the Nation’s energy needs, and to mitigate the effects of past mining. OSMRE is now accepting nominations for the 2015 ECHO Award. Criteria for nominees and details of the nomination process are available at <http://www.osmre.gov/programs/awards/echo.shtm>.

A high resolution photo of the award is available [here](#).

OSMRE carries out the requirements of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act in cooperation with states and tribes. The bureau’s objectives are to ensure that coal mining activities are conducted in a manner that protects citizens and the environment during mining, to ensure that the land is restored to beneficial use after mining, and to mitigate the effects of past mining by pursuing reclamation of abandoned coal mines. For instant updates on OSM, follow the bureau on Twitter at www.twitter.com/OSMRE or visit the OSMRE home page at www.osmre.gov.

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