



U.S. Office of Surface Mining

News Release



Feb. 20, 2004

Contact: Joe Pally, (202) 208-2565

MEDIA ADVISORY

Interior Secretary Norton to Tour Abandoned Mine Sites in Southeast Ohio, Highlighting the President's Plan to Clean Up Dangerous Abandoned Coal Mines

Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton will tour several abandoned coal mine sites in southeast Ohio on Saturday, Feb. 21, to highlight a Bush Administration plan to accelerate abandoned mine reclamation efforts in Ohio, West Virginia and across the nation. Jeff Jarrett, Director of Interior's Office of Surface Mining (OSM); Jim Carnes, Deputy Secretary of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources; Terry Van Offeren, Chief of the Ohio Abandoned Mine Land (AML) program; and Dan Schrum, of the OSM Field Office will be joining in the announcement. OSM estimates that more than 3.5 million Americans still live less than a mile from a dangerous high-priority abandoned coal site, more than half of those at risk are residents of Ohio, West Virginia and Pennsylvania.

WHAT: Interior Secretary Gale Norton will tour abandoned mine sites in southeast Ohio to highlight the President's proposal to accelerate the cleanup of dangerous abandoned coal mines and direct funds to the highest priority areas.

The reauthorization proposal would provide sufficient funding to eliminate all significant health and safety problems within 25 years, removing 142,000 people from risk annually. Under the proposed legislation, Ohio and West Virginia would see an increase in its federal reclamation grants of 73 percent and 40 percent, from \$5.6 million to \$9.7 million and \$20.8 million to \$29.2 million, respectively. Passage of this legislation will remove 25,000 more Ohio and West Virginia residents from harm annually compared to current law.

WHO: Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton
Jim Carnes, Deputy Secretary, Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Terry Van Offeren, Chief of the Ohio AML program
Jeff Jarrett, Director of the Office of Surface Mining
Dan Schrum, OSM Field Office

WHEN: Saturday, February 21 at 1:15 – 2:00 p.m.
Tour 1:15 – 1:30; Media availability 1:35 -- 2:00 p.m.

WHERE: AML Reclamation Site Tour
US 250 Highwall Site
Shortcreek Township, OH
(SW of Cadiz)
OUTDOORS – MEET IN PARKING LOT

Directions from Columbus – Take 1-70 to 1-77 North, Take Route 22 East to Cadiz, Go three miles on US 250 SE – AML site will be on your right

Directions from Wheeling, WV – Take I-70 to Route 7 North, Take US 250 to AML Site, AML Site will be on your left (3 miles east of Cadiz)

-###-

For more information visit OSM's website at <http://www.osm.gov>.