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The Town of Wise Receives \$371,000 for Wise Sports Complex Project on Abandoned Mine Lands

Wise., Va. – Improvements coming to some already busy fields will mean several more innings played at the Wise Sports Complex. The town of Wise is receiving a \$371,000 grant from the Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization (AMLER) program to install lighting, opening the complex up to opportunities for many more visitors to play ball. The Virginia Department of Energy (Virginia Energy) administers the AMLER program which is funded from the U.S. Department of Treasury. The purpose is to fund projects on abandoned mine land sites that result in an economic boost to southwest Virginia.

“It is great that the Town of Wise has received these AMLER funds to modernize their sports complex, specifically adding field lighting for an additional softball field, which will allow that field to be used for practice and increased tournament play,” **said U.S. Representative Morgan Griffith.** “Being able to revitalize and reuse abandoned mind land, like Wise has done with this beloved sports facility, is just one reason I worked so hard to expand the AMLER program to Virginia and beyond.”

The Wise Sports Complex is located near what was once a coal mine operation that was active in the 1970’s—making it eligible for the AMLER funds.

“We commend the town of Wise for seeing the opportunity in repurposing this coal mined land for a true community project,” **said Virginia Energy Acting Director Will Clear.** “This investment will trickle-down to many nearby businesses as Wise welcomes teams to its town.”

The added lighting will open the Wise Sports Complex up to hosting travel ball tournaments, which have proved to be an economic success in other communities. The park originally opened in the 1990's and hosts baseball, softball and soccer fields in addition to a cross country course.

“Wise residents saw the opportunity early on for this complex and what it could mean for our town with investments over the years,” **said Wise Town Manager Laura Roberts.** “We are grateful for the opportunity through the AMLER funding to continue to build on our goals of making this one of our many economic drivers.”

The Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization Program originated in a federal omnibus bill in 2017. Virginia Energy has received \$10 million annually for economic development on abandoned mine lands. The program administered is by the Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation Enforcement.

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