



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

1100 Bank Street (8th Floor), Richmond, VA 23219
Office: (804) 692-3200 | TDD: (800) 828-1120

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 4, 2024

Tarah Kesterson

press@energy.virginia.gov

Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization Grant of \$1.2 Million Contributes Toward Future Airport and Commercial Development

Breaks Regional Airport Authority Received a Grant for Important Infrastructure Development

Buchanan Co., Va. – Expanded water service and new telecom fiber will set the stage for a much larger development just outside of Grundy. The utility expansion is funded through an Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization grant of \$1,220,016. This infrastructure will support the future Breaks Regional Airport and an adjacent commercial development.

“A new, refurbished airport facility and surrounding commercial development introduces a world of opportunity to Buchanan County and the coalfields region,” **said U.S. Congressman Morgan Griffith.** “This grant for more than \$1.2 million helps the Breaks Regional Airport Authority build infrastructure, including adjacent commercial development. Infrastructure for commercial development near the airport has unfortunately been lacking in Buchanan County. The new Breaks Regional Airport and this money is a game changer for the region.”

“This AMLER project paves the way for growth in Buchanan County for years to come,” **said Virginia Energy Director Glenn Davis.** “With updated water access and new telecom fiber, the options are endless for commercial property so close to an airport. We will continue to find ways to bring economic vitality to former coal lands to ensure Virginia stays the best state for business in the nation.”

The project includes 1.5 miles of upgraded waterline and around 4,000 feet of telecom fiber conduit along State Route 718 which is the road to the future airport. It also improves services to residents that live nearby the development.

“These grant dollars contribute to a vision we’ve had for Buchanan County for a long time,” **said Breaks Regional Airport Authority Chairman James Keen.** “This project will provide new water lines and upgraded service for the new airport and the adjoining commercial property. Residents living along Airport Road will also benefit from those upgraded services.”



Richmond

1100 Bank St., 8th Floor
Richmond, VA 23219
(804) 692-3200

Big Stone Gap

3405 Mountain Empire Rd.
Big Stone Gap, VA 24219
(276) 523-8100

Charlottesville

900 Natural Resources Dr.
Charlottesville, VA 22903
(434) 951-6340

“Airports extend well beyond just air travel, they are economic hubs,” said **Virginia Senator Todd Pillion**. “Investments such as AMLER contribute towards the success of the future Breaks Regional Airport and the neighboring development. These are dollars well spent and play a key role in accelerating Southwest Virginia.”

“Infrastructure like this will have a great impact on bringing new businesses and help create much needed jobs in the coalfields of Southwest Virginia. We have an obligation to ensure that our region has every opportunity to grow,” said **Virginia Delegate Will Morefield**.

The AMLER project site is near several lands that were mined for coal before 1977. An adjacent active surface coal mine operation is reclaiming the site for the future airport development. The mining operations made site development possible and resulted in cost-savings in site development for the authority.

The AMLER program began in 2017 and is administered by the Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation Enforcement. The grants are managed by Virginia Energy’s Abandoned Mine Land (AML) program.

[Virginia Energy’s AML program](#) was created in 1981 and is federally funded to reclaim issues left behind by coal mining that occurred before 1977.

Pictured L to R at today’s check presentation

Tyler Lester, Senator Todd Pillion’s Office, Billie Campbell, TerraTech Engineering, Tom Lester, Delegate Will Morefield’s Office, U.S. Congressman Morgan Griffith, Daniel Kestner, Virginia Energy, James Keen, Breaks Regional Airport Authority, Lesa Baker, Virginia Energy, Randy Moore, Virginia Energy, Matt Fields, Buchanan County IDA, J.P. Richardson, Wellmore Coal Company, Jonathan Belcher, VCEDA

###

