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Big Stone Gap Receives \$2 Million For Big Cherry Reservoir Recreation Project

*Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization Funding
Contributing Toward Tourism Developments*

Big Stone Gap, Va. – Big Stone Gap is on its way to welcoming more visitors to take in one of the town’s best assets, outdoor recreation. The town of Big Stone Gap received \$2 million from the Virginia Department of Energy’s (Virginia Energy) Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization (AMLER) grant to help cover the costs of improvements expanding recreational opportunities at the Big Cherry Reservoir. AMLER is a federally funded program and is administered by Virginia Energy.

“Big Cherry Reservoir continues to grow in popularity and get the recognition it deserves because its 250-acre lake is a fisherman’s paradise,” **said U.S. Representative Morgan Griffith.** “As a recipient of this \$2 million AMLER grant, the Town of Big Stone Gap will build the reservoir’s brand further by expanding and improving recreational opportunities offered by the reservoir.”

“With community development projects like this, we’re not just drawing in tourists—we’re creating an environment that attracts businesses looking for vibrant communities,” **said Virginia Energy Director Glenn Davis.** “It’s about fostering a balance where work and play go hand in hand, making Virginia a place where people and businesses want to settle down and thrive.

New recreation opportunities will be created on the 3,253 acres of land surrounding the reservoir. Those include hiking trails and enhanced lake access. The project will also create overnight lodging opportunities through campsites, cabins and safari tents. Mining occurred in that region in the early 20th century.

“Big Stone Gap is in the heart of Appalachia and prides itself on being a stop for visitors wanting natural beauty and a slower pace,” **said Big Stone Gap Town Manager Steve Lawson.** “The Big Cherry project will build on existing opportunities for outdoor recreation and offer visitors the full experience with overnight accommodations.”

“Our region’s beauty is something worth capitalizing on and Big Stone Gap is doing just that with this project at the Big Cherry Reservoir,” **said Virginia Senator Todd Pillion.** “By increasing opportunities for visitors, especially through recreation, to our region, we will increase tourism dollars for our coalfield communities.”

“Virginia is the number one state to do business and the AMLER program encourages new ideas in unique locations such as the Big Cherry Reservoir,” **said Virginia Delegate Terry Kilgore.** “Big Stone Gap is adding to their list of things to do when visiting the town and contributing to the larger effort to accelerate Southwest Virginia.”

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.

