



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

Virginia Department of Energy

Washington Building / 8th Floor
1100 Bank Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219-3638
(804) 692-3200 FAX (804) 692-3237
www.energy.virginia.gov

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Tarah Kesterson

(276) 356-3405

tarah.kesterson@energy.virginia.gov

Virginia Department of Energy Celebrates 18th Annual Virginia Arbor Day in Buchanan County

Buchanan County, Va.- Over 150 Buchanan County High Schools students planted over 1,000 trees at the 18th annual Virginia Arbor Day celebration. Grundy, Hurley and Council High Schools brought students to a reclaimed coal mine permitted by Wellmore Coal Company to plant trees as part of the reclamation process. The Virginia Department of Energy (Virginia Energy) co-hosted the event with the Metallurgical Coal Producers Association (MCPA).

The event teaches students about the importance of environmental protection during and after coal mining. It also emphasizes the important role trees play in our daily lives. Students and volunteers planted red and white oak, maple, locust, dogwood, persimmon, apple and pine trees.

Since Virginia's Arbor Day celebration began in 2005 over 12,000 trees have been planted on nearly 45 acres of mined land. The event also meets goals of the Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative which is dedicated to restoring forests on coal mined lands in the Eastern United States.

In addition to tree planting, students had the opportunity for some hands-on learning at various educational booths. Solar and wind energy demonstrations were available. They could learn more about the coal mining process by viewing a model surface mine. Virginia Energy's mine rescue team demonstrated technology used in their roles as emergency responders and the Virginia Department of Transportation had equipment used in their everyday work available for students to test out.

Virginia Energy is grateful for community and agency partners that joined us to celebrate the 152nd Anniversary of Arbor Day that first began in Nebraska. They include: event co-host MCPA, Wellmore Coal Company, The Nature Conservancy, the Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation Enforcement (OSMRE), Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). Financial contributions were also made toward the community event by United Coal, Jenmar, Ramaco, SunCoke Energy, Joseph and Haley Bunn, Alpha Natural Resources, Simmons Equipment, Roger Nicholson and Frank B. Harrington.

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