



NEWS RELEASE

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COMMEMORATION CEREMONY FOR COALFIELDS EXPRESSWAY - HAWKS NEST SECTION HELD TODAY *First section of rough-grade road bed for the expressway completed*

BRISTOL—The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), local elected officials and Alpha Natural Resources officials commemorated the completion of the first section of rough-grade road bed for the Route 121 – Coalfields Expressway at a ceremony today.

Alpha Natural Resources constructed the rough grade road bed at a cost of \$10 million, a savings to VDOT of over \$90 million by coordinating the road bed development on mountainous terrain as part of an active surface mining operation.

“VDOT’s partnership with Alpha Natural Resources has created an opportunity to stimulate economic development and improve the transportation network for this region at a much lower cost than traditional highway construction methods,” said Michael Russell, P.E., VDOT’s Bristol District administrator.

In fall 2008, VDOT signed an agreement with Alpha Natural Resources allowing design and construction of rough grade road bed of the Hawks Nest portion of the expressway to begin.

Virginia’s 2012-2017 Six-Year Transportation Improvement Plan fully funds two additional Coalfields Expressway Projects: Doe Branch and the Pound Connector.

The Doe Branch section ties the Route 460 Connector Phase II and Hawks Nest in Buchanan County and travels west to Route 80 in the Haysi area of Dickenson County, about 4.8 miles. The cost estimate for this project is \$81.5 million for preliminary engineering to construction.

The Pound Connector is about 6.8 miles in length and begins at Route 23 in the Pound area of Wise County and extends into Dickenson County where it will connect to Route 83 via a connector road. The cost estimate for this project is approximately \$140 million for preliminary engineering to construction.

Upon completion of the Route 460 Connector Phases I and II, the Hawks Nest section will be brought to final grade.

The Route 121 – Coalfields Expressway is a proposed four-lane highway stretching approximately 49 miles from Pound in Wise County through Dickenson and Buchanan counties to the West Virginia state line.

Designated as part of the national highway system, the Coalfields Expressway will link Interstates 64 and 77 in West Virginia with Routes 23 and 460 in Virginia.

(END)

Additional Project Updates:

Route 460 Connector Phase I

VDOT's design-build contract for the Route 460 Connector Phase I was awarded to Bizzack Construction, LLC., Lexington, Ky. in August 2009. Construction began spring 2011 and the project is anticipated to be completed in August 2014. The project is valued at approximately \$90 million.

The Route 460 Connector Phase I includes design and construction of twin high-level 250-foot-high bridges, when completed will be the tallest in Virginia; a .8-mile four-lane divided highway (US Route 460) starting at the Kentucky State Line; an access ramp to Route 80 that will improve access to Breaks Interstate Park, including the construction of a bridge crossing Route 768; and secondary connections to Routes 609 and 693 from Route 80.

Route 460 Connector Phase II

Currently, VDOT is reviewing an unsolicited coal synergy proposal for Phase II of the Route 460 Connector. When Phases I and II are completed they will tie into Route 121 – Coalfields Expressway at Hawks Nest.

Route 460 Grundy Phase II

Bizzack Construction LLC, Lexington, Ky., received the \$36 million contract in fall 2008 to widen Route 460 from the recently widened section in downtown Grundy to Route 615 in the Cow Town area. The contractor is working to bring the road to grade on a new location. Although the majority of the route is on a new location, motorists can expect lane closures during daylight hours while blasting work is under way. Completion Date: September 2012

Route 460 Grundy Phase III

The \$23.3 million contract for the third and final phase of the Route 460 road widening in the Grundy area was awarded in February 2011 to Kanawha Stone Co. Inc., Nitro, W. Va. The project, just over one mile long, extends from Route 615 to the already widened section of Route 460 near Vasant. When Phase III is completed in 2014, Route 460 will be widened to four lanes from Grundy to Claypool Hill. Completion date: April 2014