



NEWS RELEASE
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PSC Presents Two Awards for Excellence in Surface Coal Mining and Reclamation

BISMARCK, ND – The North Dakota Public Service Commission (PSC) presented the Award for Excellence in Surface Coal Mining and Reclamation to two recipients this morning at the Lignite Energy Council’s annual meeting being held in Bismarck. The awards were presented to the Falkirk Mining Company and Jim Deutsch from the Public Service Commission.

“Jim Deutsch has been a titan in North Dakota history. Under his watch the coal industry has been able to grow while the state has been able to realize its goal of leaving the land as good or better than before it was mined,” said Commissioner Randy Christmann who holds the Reclamation and Abandoned Mine Lands portfolio. “The Falkirk Mining Company’s Figenskau project combines responsible use of available resources with the elimination of safety hazards from WW II era mining activities. Both are very deserving of this recognition!”

The first award was presented to the Falkirk Mining Company for their work at the former Figenskau Mine located three miles east of Underwood. This area of about 55 acres was mined from 1933 until 1948 when approximately one-third of the coal was mined by underground mining. After the mining stopped, use of the land was mainly limited to cattle grazing and the sinkholes posed a danger to livestock. A few years ago, Falkirk developed plans to re-mine the land, recover a majority of the coal, and reclaim the entire mined area eliminating the sinkholes. Falkirk started mining in this area in the fall of 2013 and completion is expected in 2017.

The second award was presented to Jim Deutsch, Director of the PSC’s Reclamation and Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) Divisions, in recognition of his involvement and leadership of the coal regulatory program over the past 40 years, and for his contributions to the success of mined land reclamation in North Dakota. Jim began employment with the PSC in 1974 and has worked with every aspect of the mining program since. He works to ensure that landowners’ rights are protected while providing the required environmental protection and ensures that the reclamation laws and rules are enforced uniformly and fairly. Because of Jim’s leadership, North Dakota’s reclamation program is routinely cited by the Office of Surface Mining as a model for efficiency and effectiveness.

The North Dakota Public Service Commission is a constitutionally created state agency with authority to permit, site and regulate business activities in the state including electric and gas utilities, telecommunications companies, power plants, electric transmission lines, pipelines, railroads, grain elevators, auctioneers, commercial weighing devices, pipeline safety and coal mine reclamation. For more information, contact the Public Service Commission at (701) 328-2400 or www.psc.nd.gov.

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