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**STATE AWARDS \$400,000 CONTRACT TO SIERRA COUNTY FIRM  
FOR MINE RECLAMATION PROJECT NEAR HILLSBORO**  
*Abandoned Mine Land Federal Funding at Risk*

**SANTA FE** – The Mining and Minerals Division of the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department has awarded a construction contract for the Lake Valley Mine Safeguard Project – Phase I, located approximately 20 miles south of Hillsboro in Sierra County. St. Cloud Mining Company of Truth or Consequences won the contract after a competitive bidding process. The \$401,528.52 contract will cover safeguarding and reclamation of 42 shafts, 26 pits and 12 adits, all of which are non-coal mine features which pose significant hazards to the visiting public. The Lake Valley Project is the first phase in a multi-phase effort to abate significant abandoned mine hazards while preserving New Mexico’s historic mining past.

“This is one of many examples of why the State of New Mexico supports reauthorization of the Abandoned Mine Land fee,” said Joanna Prukop, secretary of the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department. “The Abandoned Mine Land Program has served the public for more than 24 years by removing hazards and reclaiming areas damaged by historic mining, preserving New Mexico mining history, cultural resources, animal habit and providing work for New Mexican businesses.”

Funding for the Abandoned Mine Land Program is provided by the U.S. Department of Interior’s Office of Surface Mining through a fee levied on active coal production throughout the United States. The fee will sunset in September 2004. Congress is considering bills to reauthorize the fee. New Mexico strongly supports the reauthorization of the fee.

The project will include backfilling of 56 mine openings with approved borrow material and the construction of bat gate closures in 4 adits and 1 pit. Bat cupolas will be constructed at five shafts. These are steel closures that permit continued use of the mines as bat and owl habitat while denying access to the hazard by the public or other animals. Impact to the environment will be minimal during construction and care will be given to protect and preserve all cultural and biological resources. Areas disturbed during the safeguarding efforts will be seeded. The Lake Valley area is one of the more historically significant mining districts in New

Mexico. Gold and silver mining operations were active in this area prior to the California gold rush of the mid 1800's.

It is estimated there are more than 15,000 mine hazards scattered throughout New Mexico that remain un-safeguarded. The New Mexico Abandoned Mine Land Program has closed more than 4,000 hazardous mine openings over the past 20 years. Inactive or abandoned mines are extremely hazardous and potential visitors to these sites are advised to exercise extra caution when exploring these areas. The best proven practice to follow is to "Stay Out and Stay Alive."

For information regarding mine safeguarding or the NM Abandoned Mine Land Program, contact Robert Evetts, P.E., Abandoned Mine Land Program Manager, Mining and Minerals Division at (505) 476-3422 or [revetts@state.nm.us](mailto:revetts@state.nm.us) or visit [www.emnrd.state.nm.us](http://www.emnrd.state.nm.us) and click on Mining and Minerals, then Abandoned Mine Lands.