

Construction Begins on UBB Miners Memorial

WHITESVILLE- The Upper Big Branch Mining Memorial Group announced on Wednesday that construction has begun on the Upper Big Branch Miners Memorial. “We have been looking forward to this day since we formed nearly a year ago,” said group president, Sheila Combs. “It’s exciting to break ground on the project but it’s also a bittersweet moment as we are reminded again of the loss that this memorial represents.” The Upper Big Branch Mining Memorial Group, INC is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) established in February of 2011 to raise funds to construct a memorial plaza located in Whitesville, WV. The memorial commemorates the events that occurred at UBB, pays homage to all fallen coal miners and recognizes the importance of the coal mining industry to the Mountain State.

The group has partnered with Pray Construction, Huntington Steel and Boxley to construct the footers and a specialized, custom-built base needed to support the granite UBB Miners Memorial monument and the plaza’s entrance sign.

Pray Construction, one of the most well known and respected construction companies in the state and in the region, will manage the build and will contribute construction and engineering expertise to the project. “Pray construction considers it a great honor to assist in the installation of the Upper Big Branch Miners Memorial. The employees of Pray Construction will give our very best efforts to be sure this fitting memorial will stand for years to come. It has been a pleasure to stay in step with the other wonderful volunteers. Thank you for trusting in us,” said Pray Construction President, Mark Grigsby.

Huntington Steel has provided the steel rebar needed to build the custom concrete base that will support the weight of the memorial’s focal point and the plaza’s entrance sign. The granite UBB Miners monument, made by Rock of Ages from Vermont, is 48 feet long and 9 feet tall at its highest peak. “The Huntington Steel family is deeply honored to participate in the construction of this memorial,” said Mark W. Trimble, PE and member of the company’s executive staff. “We pray that the families of the twenty-nine miners will receive comfort and hope for the future through God’s richest blessings and from this fitting memorial to the lives lost.”

Boxley will provide concrete for the footers and the bases of the monument and entrance sign. Due to the size of the granite monument an extensive foundation of several feet of concrete is needed to ensure the longevity of the memorial. “The Upper Big Branch Miners Memorial stands as an enduring tribute to the brave miners who died that day as well as a place to honor all of the emergency response crews who worked tirelessly during this crisis,” said Jeff Perkins, Boxley’s Chief Operating Officer. “Everyone at Boxley supports this effort and we are proud to play a role in the creation of the Upper Big Branch Miners Memorial.”

Equipment and labor will be provided by the environmental crew from Alpha Natural Resources.

The Memorial Group hopes to have construction complete by April 5th, 2012. Weather and schedule permitting. For more information on the memorial go to facesofthemine.com or facebook.com/ubbminersmemorial. You can also follow the group’s progress on Twitter at [@ubbmemorial](https://twitter.com/ubbmemorial).