



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**BOONE COUNTY ORGANIZATION TO BE HONORED WITH A
GOVERNOR'S SERVICE AWARD**

CHARLESTON, W.VA. – A passionate and hard working group of volunteers have made the dream of a beautiful and fitting mining memorial a reality.

On Wednesday, August 7, Governor Earl Ray Tomblin will honor The Upper Big Branch Mining Memorial Group for its dedication to service at the annual Governor's Service Awards banquet at the Charleston Civic Center. The banquet is held as a part of *Faces of Leadership*, the annual state volunteerism conference.

Presented since 1995, the Governor's Service Awards honors individuals, families and organizations that exemplify outstanding dedication to volunteerism and community service in West Virginia. The Upper Big Branch Mining Memorial Group is one of three recipients in the Organization category.

In 2011, local volunteers formed The Upper Big Branch Mining Memorial Group with the intention of raising funds and in-kind donations to create a fitting tribute to the miners who lost their lives in the Upper Big Branch mining disaster in 2010. The town of Whitesville donated the land and work began.

Officially opened and dedicated in July 2012, The Upper Big Branch Miners Memorial now stands as an enduring tribute to the miners who died that day as well as a place to honor all of the emergency response crews who worked tirelessly during the crisis. The site serves as a quiet place of reflection for the families, friends and community affected by the Upper Big Branch Mine explosion.

Beautiful native plants and landscaping highlight the granite structure with etched images and text memorializing the coal miners. The volunteers take responsibility for the upkeep and the continued development of the site.

The memorial not only brought a whole community together, but it has become a destination for people visiting the area and interested in coal mining history.

The Governor's Service Awards are administered by Volunteer West Virginia, the state's Commission for National and Community Service. A volunteer review committee reads and selects the recipients on the basis of achievement, community needs, continuing involvement, innovation and impact of service.

Other recipients of the 2013 Governor's Service Awards include, by category:

- ***Lifetime Achievement:*** Delbert "Duke" Horstemeyer, Hancock County; Ruth Thayer, Wayne County
- ***Youth:*** Tiffani Webb, Cabell County
- ***Adult:*** Thomas McChesney, Cabell County; Nancy Kissinger, Raleigh County
- ***Senior:*** Gloria Martin, Greenbrier County; Larry Rogers, Logan County
- ***Family:*** Pamela and James McPeak, Monroe County
- ***National Service:*** Colleen Barnhart, Pleasants County
- ***Organization:*** The Carpenter's Corner, Raleigh County; Alderson Ministerial Association, Greenbrier County

For tickets to the awards banquet, or information about the conference, contact Moya Doneghy at (304) 558-0111 or 1-800-WV-HELPS, or by email at moya.doneghy@wv.gov.

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