



Alpha Natural Resources to Permanently Close Upper Big Branch Mine

BRISTOL, Va., April 4, 2012 /PRNewswire/ -- Alpha Natural Resources, Inc. (NYSE: ANR) announced today that it plans to permanently close the Upper Big Branch (UBB) mine near Whitesville, W.Va.

UBB was the scene of a mine explosion on April 5, 2010, in which 29 miners tragically lost their lives. Owned by Massey Energy Company at the time of the accident, Alpha acquired the idle mine on June 1, 2011, with its purchase of Massey Energy.

The portals that allow entry to the mine will be permanently sealed with concrete barriers that prevent future access, and areas around the portals will be reclaimed. All boreholes will be plugged and mine fan shafts will be capped, barring access to the mine. The work is expected to commence shortly and be completed this summer.

In announcing the permanent closure of UBB, Kevin Crutchfield, Alpha's CEO, said, "Though two years have passed, everyone still has vivid memories of the tragedy and the suffering the miners' families endured. For all of us in the mining industry, it is a solemn reminder of why we must always put safety first in everything we do at work and at home. Our hearts go out to the families of those lost at UBB on this anniversary of the accident.

"When Massey joined Alpha last year, we brought all 7,000 Massey employees through our proprietary Running Right safety process, which led to a significant improvement in safety performance. We are currently making significant safety-related investments in leading-edge technologies that will make coal mines safer throughout the industry. And this June, Alpha will break ground on the Running Right Leadership Academy, a state-of-the-art center for safety training that eventually will be open to the entire industry. While we wish this tragedy had never happened, we are committed to doing our part in helping the coal industry continuously improve its safety performance."

Alpha is working on the plan to seal UBB with the Mine Safety and Health Administration, a unit of the federal Department of Labor, and the West Virginia Office of Miners' Health Safety and Training.

About Alpha Natural Resources

With \$7.1 billion in total revenue in 2011, Alpha Natural Resources ranks as America's second-largest coal producer by revenue and third-largest by production. Alpha is the nation's largest supplier of metallurgical coal used in the steel-making process and is a major supplier of thermal coal to electric utilities and manufacturing industries. In 2011 the company had more than 200 customers on five continents. More information about Alpha can be found on the company's Web site at www.alphanr.com.

SOURCE Alpha Natural Resources, Inc.

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