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## **EPCAMR organizes tour for OSM/VISTAs to the last historical mining industry dinosaur in the Northern Anthracite Coal Fields Huber Breaker**

Ashley, PA – November 15, 2010

The Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation in conjunction with the Huber Breaker Preservation Society offered a full informational outside tour and inside look of the last standing coal breaker in the northern Anthracite Coal Region for OSM/VISTAs within the Anthracite Heritage Alliance. The tour was led by current Huber Breaker Preservation Society Membership President, Bill Best, who imbued his extensive knowledge of the history and functions of the Breaker and all of its parts of both the remaining structures and those long since demolished or removed. Mr. Best took a party of eight people, including five OSM/VISTAs and two supervisors through the major remaining buildings, including a climb directly up the conveyor belt catwalk that supplied coal to the top of the 10-story high coal breaker.

Participating in the tour was Chris Deemer with Eckley Miner's Village, who initiated the interest in having a full educational experience at the site. Megan Blackmon of Schuylkill Co. Conservation District, Michael Stanton of Schuylkill Headwaters Association, Michael Bloom with Hazleton Civic Partnership/Delaware and Lehigh Rails to Trails, Wren Brady Dugan-EPCAMR Community Watershed Development Coordinator through the OSM/VISTA Anthracite Heritage Alliance, and Sarah Koontz with Susquehanna Greenway Partnership rounded out the party. Robert E. Hughes, EPCAMR's Executive Director shared his thoughts on the tour by saying, "EPCAMR hopes that through this regional collaboration tour with our fellow regional volunteer watershed community development coordinators that work for the OSM/VISTA Anthracite Heritage Alliance that we could expand our outreach and publicity efforts to gain additional support for saving this fossil of a building. Once it's gone, there will never be another structure as ominous and telling as this one that could explain to our next generation of children the reasons for the rise and the fall of the Anthracite Mining Industry in Northeastern PA. Coal mining history of the Anthracite Region will become a thing of the past."

The Office of Surface Mining's Volunteers In Service To America (OSM/VISTAs) work on a great variety of projects including water monitoring, biological sampling, historic preservation and clean up efforts, community mobilization and revitalization, event organization and fund raising/grant writing. The goal of every OSM/VISTA is to lower poverty by improving the environment on a grass roots level within the community. In addition, the EPCAMR Executive Director Robert Hughes, and Program Manager Michael Hewitt, attended to provide insight to the support that they have provided to the Huber Breaker Preservation Society over the last decade.

Wren Brady Dugan has been assisting the Huber Breaker with developing grant proposals to secure additional funding for various phases of construction of the Anthracite Region's Miner's Memorial and park development.

The Huber Breaker Preservation Society is a 501c3 dedicated to preserving the history and legacy of the Anthracite Region's last standing coal breaker. Established in 1990, the HBPS has been working towards creating a public park on the three acres they own in front of the Breaker, including an 8'x10' black granite Anthracite Region Miner's Memorial to be installed in the park. A Buy-A-Brick Campaign is still underway and pavers that will be laid out at the site will be made from recycled pervious pavement and iron oxide, a metal commonly found in local abandoned mine drainage discharges. The HBPS hopes to have benches, and plantings along walking trails, interspersed with interpretive educational kiosks detailing the workings of the Breaker and life in a patch town. The Huber Breaker still remains under ownership of #1 Contracting, Inc. and is private property. Trespassing is illegal and not encouraged. EPCAMR received and signed liability waivers provided by #1 Contracting, Inc. in order to conduct the tour at the site.

For more information or to schedule a tour of the Huber Breaker, visit [www.huberbreaker.org](http://www.huberbreaker.org).



The Ascent up the Conveyor-Michael Hewitt-EPCAMR, Chris Deemer, Michael Bloom (front row L to R)

Sarah Koontz, Mike Blackmon, Megan Williams Blackmon, Wren Brady Dugan-EPCAMR OSM/VISTA