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**MISSOURI ATTORNEY GENERAL ENFORCEMENT
ACTIONS**

BOND FORFEITURE

Bond Forfeiture obtained to pay for reclamation of abandoned coal mine area. October 24, 1996.

Approximately 1,700 acres of abandoned surface and strip coal mines in central Missouri will undergo reclamation financed by the forfeiture of almost \$1.4 million in surety bonds. The funds will be used to help return the land in southwest Randolph and northern Howard counties to its pre-mining condition.

The now bankrupt Universal Coal and Energy Corporation ceased mining operations on the land in the late 1980s. The company did some reclamation work until abandoning the site in a poor condition in 1994, prompting the state to file suit seeking forfeiture of the bonds. Surety bonds and other financial assurance instruments are required by the Missouri Land Reclamation Commission to cover expenses such as this reclamation. "They act as an insurance policy for the state that his land won't be left abandoned in an unusable condition or be allowed to cause environmental problems such as erosion and pollution from water runoff for the current owners, neighboring landowners and future generations," Attorney General Jay Nixon said.

The bonds to be forfeited were issued by Aetna Casualty and Surety Co., The Travelers Indemnity co., and Lincoln General Insurance Co., on behalf of Universal Coal and Energy.

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