

Agency approves major coal mine

The state Department of Natural Resources' recent decision to approve Diamond Shamrock-Chuitna Coal's surface mining application is the first approval of a major new coal mine since the state's surface coal mining program was instituted in 1983, according to DNR officials.

Gerald Gallagher, director of the DNR Division of Mining, said the decision is important in making Alaska a major exporter of coal to Pacific Rim markets.

"With the signing of this permit, we are sending a clear signal to potential coal buyers that the state is serious about developing our coal resources," he said.