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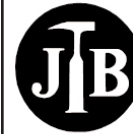
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STAGG and ErMC2 to Merge

By Karen Stagg
Stagg Resource Consultants
Emily H. Green
Environmental Risk

Stagg Resource Consultants, Inc. ("STAGG"), and Environmental Risk Management Consulting Company, LLC ("ErMC2"), recently announced their intention to merge. The intended merger will place the two firm's complementary services to the mining industry under common management through The Woodbridge Group, LLC, a holding company organized by the principals of the two firms.

"The mining industry is one of the most dynamic industries the world has known, characterized by its resiliency and its ability to adapt to constant change, even as it continues to provide the raw materials that have helped build contemporary society," said Alan Stagg. "STAGG is proud to make its contribution to the continued well-being of this industry." Rick Thomas and Alan Stagg believe the merger creates a firm with the ability to offer a unique range of services, extending from pre-development geologic and operating feasibility studies through production and on to mine closure and final reclamation, all the while providing risk management in all its



Alan Stagg

many facets.

STAGG, a nationally recognized natural resource consulting firm, was formed by Alan Stagg more than 30 years ago. Stagg, a professional geologist, has spent more than 40 years in the mining industry, beginning his career with The New Jersey Zinc Company in its newly formed exploration program in the southeastern U.S. This program resulted in the discovery of the first major zinc district in the country in more than 50 years. As exploration activities waned and mine development began, Stagg was given the responsibility for developing and implementing The Zinc Company's entry into the coal industry. The company's initial acquisition was the Mary Helen operation in Harlan County, Kentucky. In early 1975

Stagg resigned his position as Manager-Coal to begin his consulting practice. In the intervening years, Stagg has focused heavily on the economic evaluation of mining-related properties and operations, including the development of detailed cost and financial models. He is a certified mineral appraiser, a frequent presenter at industry meetings, and an instructor in various workshops and short courses.

ErMC2's Rick Thomas, an attorney with a bachelor's degree in mining engineering, has 32 years experience in various aspects of coal and hard rock mining and mine reclamation, including 23 years of legal practice related to surety. A problem solver by nature, Thomas was the primary author of the Van-American run-off plan. Additionally, he was among the team that formulated the AIG - Horizon Natural Resources bankruptcy solution, resulting in no net loss to AIG. ErMC2 currently manages AIG's portion of the ensuing run-off. Other accomplishments of Thomas include co-editing the three-volume treatise on Kentucky Mineral Law and founding the University of Kentucky Environmental Institute.

When Thomas was the CEO of an internationally recognized



Rick Thomas

environmental surety company, he saw a need for integrated engineering, legal, and insurance services and founded ErMC2 in 2001 to fill this niche market. Thus, when complex environmental risk problems arise, ErMC2 is able to draw upon its mining engineers, lawyers, environmental insurance agents, financial analysts, underwriters, and accountants for their expertise. Although hiring individual professional firms to provide each of these services can be effective, Thomas believes the timeliness and integrity of the project is more likely to be compromised with this approach.

STAGG continually evaluates the mining industry's needs and strives to expand and adapt its services to meet these needs.

The firm currently has nine basic service areas, ranging from geology and environmental to operational and economic analysis, formal appraisals, and litigation support and expert testimony. The company works across the entire spectrum of the mining industry on a national and international level, including coal, oil, and natural gas; base and precious metals; and industrial rocks and minerals.

Thomas believes that in today's highly regulated society, effective risk management is essential for both businesses and individuals. According to Thomas, "Conflicts invariably exist between those who want to develop our communities and natural resources and those who want to protect the integrity of the environment." He believes that ErMC2 understands the necessity of both in the way his company is able to view environmental risk from all perspectives.

The integration of STAGG and ErMC2 is well underway with the establishment of "The Woodbridge Group, LLC," a holding company in which both Stagg and Thomas have invested shares. The officers of The Woodbridge Group, LLC, are as follows: Alan Stagg, Chairman; Rick Thomas, President; and Gaye Hager, Secretary/Treasurer.