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TOP STORY

SCRA, Kulpmont100 receive \$200,000 and \$160,000 grants from DCED

By MARK GILGER THE NEWS-ITEM mark_g@newsitem.com

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Sen. John Gordner, center, holds a large cardboard check in the amount of \$200,000, which represents a state grant Shamokin Cre Restoration Alliance (SCRA) has been awarded. SCRA officials in attendance at a press conference Thursday in Kulpmont included President Jim Koharski, Steve Motyka, John Bucanelli and Leanne Bjorklund, along with state Rep. Kurt Masser.

KULPMONT — Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance (SCRA) and Kulpmont100 have received grants from the state Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) in the amounts of \$200,000 and \$160,000, respectively.

During a brief press conference Thursday afternoon at the Kulpmont Veterans Memorial Complex, Sen. John Gordner (R-27) and state Rep. Kurt Masser (R-107) announced the grant awards.

Gordner, who presented a large cardboard check to SCRA officials in the amount of \$200,000, said the money will be used for a full watershed assessment and restoration plan for Shamokin Creek.

The initial assessment includes comprehensive studies of flow rates, acid mine drainage and GIS mapping.

SCRA member and Kulpmont Councilman Steve Motyka, who has been very active in securing grant funding for SCRA and other organizations in the borough, thanked DCED, Gordner and other state and federal officials for their work in obtaining the much-needed funding.

“This is the catalyst we need to get more major projects done,” Motyka said. “This is a big step for SCRA.”

SCRA President Jim Koharski added, “This will help us begin a project that started 25 years ago. In the past, there wasn’t much funding available to us, but thanks to the efforts of DCED and state and federal officials, we finally obtained a very substantial grant.”

Gordner said, “This a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to take advantage of the tremendous amount of federal dollars available to multiple organizations for different projects.

The senator pointed out a federal infrastructure bill passed in 2021 made available five years of funding for coal reclamation projects.

Gordner said, “I want to commend the alliance for seeking to take another step in upgrading the water quality within Shamokin Creek. “I am pleased to assist them in obtaining these crucial state funds to start that extensive process.”

Shamokin Creek has been plagued by orange deposits of iron for many years. SCRA’s mission is to eventually restore the creek to pristine condition, provide healthier streams and creeks throughout the Shamokin Creek Watershed and restore the watershed so it supports normal aquatic life.

The nonprofit organization involves local governments, businesses and citizens in clean-up efforts and provides opportunities for those who live in the watershed area to learn about abandoned mine land issues and restore abandoned mine lands to a state that supports commercial and residential development and recreational uses.

Masser said the \$160,000 grant for Kulpmont100, a civic-minded, fundraising organization that has spearheaded multiple improvement projects in the borough, will be used to install lights and a pavilion at Terry-Miriello Stadium.

On behalf of the organization, Jeff Gilotti, president of Kulpmont100, expressed his appreciation to Masser and other state officials for securing the grant.

Gordner and Masser, who talked about the great working relationship they have, also praised the efforts of state Rep. Lynda Schlegel Culver and Pennsylvania Secretary of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Cindy Dunn for their assistance in obtaining the grants.

Other members of SCRA and Kulpmont100 also were in attendance at the press conference.