

Engineering Consulting Services, Inc. (ECSI), of Lexington, Ky., was a finalist in the American Council of Engineering Companies' 44th annual Engineering Excellence Awards competition for the Portal 31 Exhibition Mine in Lynch, Ky. The project garnered an Honor Award.

ACEC is the Washington-D.C.-based business association representing approximately 5,700 independent engineering companies throughout the United States.

ECSI worked with museum and exhibit designers to transform a deactivated mine portal into a high-tech museum that showcases Kentucky's coal mining heritage, from the days of picks and shovels to modern equipment. Portal 31 is the last leg of a series of area attractions designed to bring much-needed tourism dollars to this part of the state. The project team ensured that the exhibit area was safe for visitors by designing a combination roof control plan that utilizes a high-strength fiber mesh/resin bolting system. Walls were stabilized with an experimental high-tensile sealant that binds the rock face. ECSI also designed a pump and drainage system, ventilation plans, and new mine seals.

The project was among 163 engineering projects from throughout the nation that were recognized by ACEC as preeminent engineering achievements for 2009. Judging for the prestigious Engineering Excellence Awards – known industry-wide as the “Academy Awards” of the engineering industry – took place in February, conducted by a distinguished panel of more than 30 engineers and architects, along with representatives from government, media, and academia. Criteria for awards include uniqueness and originality, technical, social and economic value, complexity, and success of the projects in meeting goals.

All winners, including 16 Honor Awards, eight Grand Awards and the “Grand Conceptor Award” for best overall engineering achievement, were recognized at the Engineering Excellence Awards Gala, held Tuesday, April 27, 2010, at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Washington, D.C.