

2021 West Virginia Mining Symposium Continues Coal's Tradition



Chris Hamilton
President



Jason Bostic
Vice President



Heath Lovell
Chairman



Bill Raney
Retired

The 48th Annual West Virginia Mining Symposium presented by the West Virginia Coal Association (WVCA) was held on January 12, 2021 at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Charleston, WV. There were 55 in attendance with over 65 attending virtually.

Chris Hamilton, recently appointed President of WVCA, welcomed attendees. “This is a great opportunity for our industry to come together to highlight all the greatness and good that we bring to the State and to the country and to showcase the positive side of our business. It also provides us with a forum to explore and discuss our challenges and advance realistic and workable solutions. As you know, we are truly at a crossroads as an industry, with more and more people writing us off every day. You couple the fast paced, anti-sentiment that seemingly rains throughout society today, with the growing ESG pressures, and an incoming federal Administration that's committed to a zero-carbon economy, it becomes abundantly clear, we have our work cut out for us.”

The coal industry has always faced challenges, but none quite as serious as those that we are looking at today. Forewarning is fair warning. Harder times are ahead and our industry is threatened. Hamilton asked a number of questions. Are we prepared to effectively respond to today's headwinds? Are our resources fine-tuned and ready to oppose and debate those who want to see us foldup? And are each of us doing all that we can do to deal with the challenges that we face? That question will be asked over and over as we go forward. Are we doing everything humanly possible to protect and preserve coal and coal mining? We will ask that of our governor, we will ask that of our legislative leaders and our congressional delegation. We will ask it of our friends and families, and Friends of Coal everywhere.

Are we doing everything humanly possible to preserve and protect coal and coal mining? We represent an enterprise of unbelievable proportions. Our State's flagship industry. So many hardworking West Virginians and communities depending on us, so they can provide for themselves, feed their families and educate their children. Coal mining is among the most honorable of professions known to man. Miners and mine managers should be held in the highest esteem from everyone in our great country or state, especially from our government. After all, coal magically contributes more than any other industry to our overall health, our security, and our total environment.

But, danger lurks, ESG forces are mounting of unbelievable proportions. They are targeting banks, financial institutions, and lending companies to run away from our businesses. Utilities are being pressured to shed fossil energy assets, and the cost of doing business for us continues to climb. Even here in West Virginia, we have recently experienced our state regulated utilities advance initiatives and policies and agree with actions that move them away from coal-fired generation. There are no magic bullets. Mild weather patterns, like bad or weak economies, come and go. The coal industry has always had its share of challenges but none quite as serious or threatening as those we face today. Today's challenges are also political in nature, as everyone knows, or are being driven by political agendas. If these challenges were technical in nature, we'd have them solved by this evening, according to Hamilton. For we have the brightest, the most competent technical personnel you'll find anywhere on the planet. So, we must be better prepared and plan to debate the issues more cohesively with utmost professionalism, which has always been a strong trademark of this industry.



The events in DC on January 6 should remind everyone that hate and militant behavior is not acceptable in any way. Hamilton stressed: “However, this in no way shape or form should limit or preclude the industry from standing up for coal and staking out a forthright and unwavering position on behalf of the men and women who mine it and manufacture two of our nation's most needed ingredients: coal generated electricity that keeps the lights on and our homes comfortable, even in the most severe weather events; and the toughest infrastructure component known to man, which is steel forged from the furnaces and fired with none other than West Virginia's finest and highest quality metallurgical coal.”

WVCA, plans to lead by example, exhibiting the same toughness, brawn, and brain, coupled with a sheer professionalism that exemplifies this great American industry. There is such a great story to tell and today provides that opportunity to do just that and to reset our efforts, recommit to our industry, and the many tasks at hand.

Our national government is in transition, our state government is in transition, the world of energy and our industry is in transition, and WVCA is in transition. Hamilton and Jason Bostic, Vice President, WVCA, see an opportunity to be a little better, to sharpen the pencil, and to be a little more inviting so our actions reflect our total association and its members. Hamilton thanked everyone for taking time from busy schedules to join the Symposium and provided a welcome to the 48th Annual Mining Symposium.

“We are so fortunate at the Association to have Alliance Resource Partners as WVCA’s chairman this year,” said Hamilton. “They bring great vision, leadership, support and an array of tremendous resources to our organization for the good of the entire industry. Joe Craft, Heath Lovell, Evan Midler, and their entire executive team are the right fit for these tough times. They are such an asset for our industry and to have at the core of the West Virginia Coal Association. It's truly a pleasure to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with them and with you going forward. Please join me in welcoming our Chairman who will be speaking to us virtually, Heath Lovell with Alliance Resource Partners.”

List of Speakers Addressing Symposium (click names to access)

[US Senator Shelley Moore Capito](#) (R-WV)

[US Senator Joe Manchin](#) (D-WV)

[Rich Nolan](#), President & CEO, National Mining Association, “2021 Challenges for US Coal”

[Michelle Bloodworth](#), President & CEO, America’s Power, “US Electric Power Generation”

[Nicholas Cron](#), Vice President, XCoal, “Global Coal Demand and Export Opportunities”

[Joe Craft](#), President & CEO, Alliance Resource Partners, “US Coal 2021-Today’s Challenges”

[Rep. David McKinley](#), (R-WV), US House of Representatives WV-1

[Rep. Carol Miller](#) (R-WV), US House of Representatives WV-3

[Steve Winberg](#), Assistant Secretary of Energy, “Sustaining CoalFirst Initiative”

[Janet Gellici](#), Chief Executive, National Coal Council, “Opportunities for Coal 2021 Onwards”
Environmental & Safety Awards