

Coal Panel Discussion



Ernie Thrasher, Michelle Bloodworth, Michelle Manook, Jimmy Brock with Moderator, David Kanagy

On Day 3 and last day of the Bluefield Coal Symposium, one of the highlights of the event was the Coal Discussion Panel moderated by David Kanagy, Executive Director & CEO, Society for Mining, Metallurgy & Exploration, Inc. The panel comprised:

Michelle Bloodworth, President & CEO, Americas Power
Jimmy Brock, Chairman & CEO, CONSOL Energy
Chris Hamilton, President & CEO, West Virginia Coal Association
Michelle Manook, Chief Executive, FutureCoal (formerly World Coal Association)
Ernie Thrasher, CEO, XCoal Energy Resources

All the panel members agreed that coal's story should have been publicized much earlier and louder and the job of promoting coal was a massive task. The younger generation has been lost which makes the job more difficult.

"Instead of the coal industry expecting its customers to fight for it, the industry should fight for its interests and for its future," said Thrasher. "That was a mistake that was made in the past."

Hamilton discussed the need for coal power and what he believes is in store for the future. "A lot of regulatory matters are in discussion," said Hamilton, "but there is still a basic need for coal and our coal miners and coal operators around the state and region are prepared to meet that need." He congratulated coal operations, who are impacted by public policy more than any other business, for their determination and strength to battle the odds and survive.

"I am passionate about removing people around the world from energy poverty and many do not know that there are over 700 million people globally, who do not have electricity," said Manook. "We must all work together and seek ways to achieve that and coal is playing a major role."

Manook explained that India's rising coal consumption now surpasses the combined totals of Europe and North America, which highlights the shifting dynamics in global energy use. China's production and consumption have reached un-



precedented levels, further solidifying its role as the world's largest coal producer and consumer. Climate is a global issue, she said.

"America's coal industry needs to remember that it has friends and partners around the world," said Manook. "With its 400 years of abundant coal reserves, the U.S. must fully utilize its natural resources to remain an economic power house."

Jimmy Brock discussed the collision course of coal power plants being shut too soon with the Nation's rising electricity demand caused by the widespread deployment of AI and new data centers and emphasized CONSOL Energy's NOT SO FAST public relations program. The mission of the campaign is to warn of the dangers of switching away from fossil fuels too quickly "before replacement sources of energy are in place," added Bloodworth.

"It's about educating the public, stakeholders and policymakers that transitioning away from coal comes with extreme consequences," said Brock. "These are consequences that I don't believe the American people are willing to take at this time."