



## MCPA Opens 44th Annual Conference Emphasizing ‘Met Coal Makes Steel’ as Key Industry Message

“Met Coal Makes Steel” was the recurring message Monday during the opening day of the Metallurgical Coal Producers Association (MCPA) 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Roanoke, WV. This year’s conference focused on perspectives and outlook for the metallurgical coal industry.

Panelists from five of the MCPA’s met coal producer members shared their perspectives on the industry during a morning panel discussion which followed a brief presentation by MCPA President Ben Beakes and welcome by MCPA Chairman Bob Cline.

Beakes noted MCPA members now make up of the majority of met coal produced in the United States, having recruited a new producer member in the past year and 14 new associate members. The organization began with four producer members in two states and 75 associate members and has now grown to include four states, six producer members and 125 associate members.

He pointed out the many uses of Met coal in making steel – 52 percent of which is used for infrastructure needs; 13 percent for automotive needs; and 16 percent for mechanical needs.

Seventy-five percent of the Met coal produced in the U.S., he said, is exported, further illustrating steel’s global commodity status. While pricing has decreased from the \$600 to \$650 per ton mark of just a few years ago, it still remains hovering around the \$200 per ton mark, while the cost of mining has risen due to inflation to the \$120-\$130 per ton mark.

Predominantly, Beakes said, 56 percent of MCPA member export coal passes through the port at Norfolk, Va. The Port of Baltimore, until the recent bridge catastrophe there, had 18 percent of the market; while the Port at Mobile, Ala., held 16 percent.

In a 2022-23 comparison of Met coal exports, Beakes noted statistics show North America experienced a 10.9 percent increase; South America, a 16.4 percent increase; Europe, a 10.9 percent decrease; and Asia, a 34.7 percent increase. Top steel producers in 2021-2022, he said were China, India, Japan, the United States and Russia.

“We have been on a mission in marketing metallurgical coal,” Beakes said, showing the organization’s marketing plan across all channels. “That mission is to show that ‘Met Coal makes steel’.”

The first panel discussion of the day focused on perspectives from Andy Eidson, CEO of Alpha Metallurgical Resources; Bob Bennett, chief commercial officer at Blackhawk Mining; Chris Meyering, vice president of Coronado Global; J.P. Richardson, vice president of operations for Metinvest-United Coal; and Scott Kreutzer, senior vice president and chief administrative officer of RAMACO Resources.

They each talked about opportunities and challenges in today’s markets and efforts to rise to meet those. They agreed the future for Met coal remains bright, but costs remain as a challenge to be met. Safety, however, remains a focus in all markets.

They each provided their thoughts on coal news of the day related to the acquisition of U.S. Steel. Watching what the new owner might do -- or not do -- with current idle steel assets, once that ownership is decided, they agreed, will be interesting and depending on how that turns out, could have some significant impact on investments and U.S. steel markets.

When looking at challenges, it was noted the Met coal industry needs to ensure education about the use of Met coal in the steel making process is critical. They agreed the narrative needs to reflect reality and that is that “the world needs steel.”

The perils of “regulation by interpretation” were also discussed. With so many regulations remaining on the books, the

interpretation changes, which can impact permitting and operations.

Tight labor markets and the opportunities to develop the next generation of coal miners, will also remain a challenge. The second panel of the day was comprised of Shelley Surles, Alpha Metallurgical Resources; Jim Constant, Coronado Global Resources; and Jack Toombs, Metinvest-United Coal, each of whom showcased environmental projects within their respective companies.

Panelists discussed their use of technology to help address environmental stewardship on the front end rather than just as a response to issues. Results have shown a positive effect on compliance across the board. Panelists all pointed to projects that have benefited communities and left the environment in much better condition than prior to when mining commenced, including water treatment facilities and community infrastructure projects.

Looking to the future, all three panelists agreed technology will play an important role in helping to make mining safer and in how to address environmental challenges as they arise and as regulations get tighter.

Those in attendance Monday also heard from Regina Fairchild, of the West Virginia Friends of Coal Ladies Auxiliary, who spoke about the work of that organization in promoting coal and in supporting the community through scholarships and more.

The second day of the conference will begin at 8 a.m. Tuesday and focus on the economy and the future of Met coal from the railroad perspective; an outlook for the Met Coal industry; perspectives related to Virginia Energy; and federal oversight challenges.

## About MCPA

The Metallurgical Coal Producers Association is a non-profit trade organization comprised of metallurgical coal producers in Appalachia and those who support its producing members' operations. The six coal producers are: Alpha Metallurgical Resources, Coronado Global, United Coal Company LLC (a subsidiary of Metinvest Group), Ramaco Resources, Inc., Robindale Energy and Blackhawk Mining. Together, MCPA members make up the majority of met coal produced in the U.S. Its mission is to advance the opportunities of the metallurgical coal industry through advocacy, education and outreach. Learn more at [www.metcoalproducers.com](http://www.metcoalproducers.com).



*"Met Coal Makes Steel" was the recurring message during Monday's opening of the Metallurgical Coal Producers 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Roanoke, WV. From left are panelists Chris Meyering, Coronado Global; Andy Eidson, Alpha Metallurgical Resources; J.P. Richardson, Metinvest-United Coal; Bob Bennett, Blackhawk Mining; and Scott Kreutzer, RAMACO Resources, who talked about the opportunities and challenges facing the industry today.*