



## West Virginia Benefits from Increased Global Demand for Coal



Coal is once again a hot commodity. The Wall Street Journal reports a surge in the international demand for coal to produce electricity, especially in underdeveloped countries that are still trying to

bring cheap, reliable power to millions of people.

The Energy Information Administration reports that U.S. coal exports doubled in 2017 and are expected to rise again this year. In West Virginia, coal exports increased from 24 million tons in 2016 to 34 million last year, a rise of 42 percent. “The rebound shows coal’s resilience, especially in emerging regions, and recent events suggest the market for black combustible rock will remain strong,” reported the Journal. “In the U.S., the Trump administration has proposed to reverse U.S. rules on coal emissions, and countries including India and Vietnam are planning major coal projects.”

The resurgence of coal is startling given the considerable obstacles. The fuel has become a pariah in many developed countries because coal-fired power plants are a leading emitter of carbon that contributes to climate change.

But while scientists, policy makers, environmentalists and industrialists argue about the impact of global warming, underdeveloped countries are often more concerned about how to get electricity to a village so people can have lights, refrigeration, clean water and a connection to the rest of the world... essentials that an estimated 1 billion people do not have currently.

“Coal plants are attractive because they are less expensive to build than renewable energy facilities,” the Journal reports. “The cost of constructing a renewables plant is roughly double the outlay of a fossil-fuel facility, experts say.”

West Virginia economic experts say the increased international demand provides new markets for coal companies. “The expansion of coal-fired generation in India, Vietnam and Turkey will help to offset the decline in domestic demand for the steam coal that is mined in both northern and southern West Virginia, said Brian Lego, an economic forecaster at WVU’s Bureau of Business and Economic Research.

Lego said even with the challenges of concerns about climate change and the increased difficulty of obtaining financing for coal-fired power plants, there could be “some new mine investment in West Virginia—new mines opening, longwall investment, etc.”

To read more, see excerpt: <http://wvmetronews.com/2018/09/05/west-virginia-benefits-from-increased-global-demand-for-coal/>



### DBE Opportunities

**Want to learn more about the DBE Program?  
Call or email us today to receive assistance in the below categories!**

- Getting a letter of bond ability
- Capability Statement Development and Assistance
- Website Development and Assistance
- How to become DBE Certified
- Training and Technical Assistance

**Phone Number:** 800-423-7058

**Email:** [Info@wvdbesupport.com](mailto:Info@wvdbesupport.com)

### About The Program

The Construction Estimating Institute (CEI) works with West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) as the statewide provider of the federally funded Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) Supportive Services Program.

We want to increase the number of certified DBEs participating in highway and bridge construction, as well as assist DBEs in growing and eventually becoming self-sufficient. Additionally, CEI provides supportive services by assisting prime contractors and consultants with identifying DBEs for subcontracting opportunities on priority projects.

## Building for the Future: West Virginia leads the nation in construction employment



Just a few years ago, West Virginia ranked last in the nation for construction employment.

The state actually ranked lower than last, coming in at No. 51 behind Washington, D.C., according to Mike

Clowser, executive director of the Contractors Association of West Virginia.

“The last four or five years were a very difficult time for West Virginia construction companies,” he said. “It was a very difficult time for people to make a living working. We went over a year being rock bottom in the country.”

During those lean years, many West Virginia construction companies were crossing state lines to take jobs, Clowser said. “Because of the lack of development in the state, because of the reduced amount of dollars available to the West Virginia (Division) of Highways, a lot of our members were going out of state,” he said. “They were bidding in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Maryland just to keep their employees working.” But now — thanks to increased construction activity related to the oil and gas industry, coal industry and projects stemming from Gov. Jim Justice’s “Roads to Prosperity” campaign — West Virginia leads the nation in construction employment, Clowser said.

“To look at where we are today — versus where we were two, three, four years ago — is a remarkable turnaround,” he said. A large part of that turnaround can be attributed to the construction activity resulting from the “Roads to Prosperity” campaign, Justice’s \$2.8 billion statewide road repair initiative, Clowser said.

“With the amount of work that the West Virginia Division of Highways (is) putting out, those companies are now coming home and bidding in West Virginia,” he said.

“They are bringing their West Virginia workers back home to work on West Virginia projects.” Another factor contributing to the uptick comes from the multiple natural gas pipeline projects underway in the state, Clowser said.

“A number of our members are working in the oil and gas industry,” he said. “If you put in a well site, you’ve got to have a pad. You’ve got to have a road and you’ve got to have water lines into it.” Other firms are seeing increased activity in the coal industry, Clowser said.

“For the first time in a number of years, our guys are going back into coal,” he said. “They are starting to get back to work; they’re doing some mine faceups and working on some coal-haul roads.”

While the state’s construction industry as a whole has greatly improved in the past few years, the majority of the growth revolves around North Central West Virginia, Clowser said.

“With the hospitals, office buildings, retail and educational facilities in between Clarksburg and Morgantown, our members have been busy,” he said. “They’re actually looking for workers.”

Jamie Ridgeway, vice president of March-Westin, a Morgantown-based construction firm that handles projects throughout the state, said his company has benefited from the ongoing construction boom.

“We’ve been very busy for the past couple of years,” he said. “And it looks like that will be continuing for the foreseeable future.”

March-Westin is looking to hire additional skilled workers, Ridgeway said. “We’re actively looking for people,” he said. “I would say that the labor pool has tightened with the growth of jobs over the last year. We’ve still been able to find and hire some talented folks, but there are fewer of them available at this point.”

To read more, see excerpt: [https://www.wvnews.com/statejournal/news/building-for-the-future-west-virginia-leads-the-nation-in/article\\_e96169cc-860c-513d-8439-15810b87aac6.html](https://www.wvnews.com/statejournal/news/building-for-the-future-west-virginia-leads-the-nation-in/article_e96169cc-860c-513d-8439-15810b87aac6.html)

### Supportive Services Offered



- Estimating Training
- Building Capacity
- Mobilization Financing
- Bonding Assistance
- Marketing Plan Development
- Creating a Business Plan
- Website Development



**BONDING,  
FINANCING,  
AND  
INSURANCE**

CEI is an educational organization providing the highest quality construction training in the industry. Over 100,000 owners, estimators, project managers, field supervisors, office support staff, foremen, laborers, and key management personnel have attended courses that are offered nationwide. The courses provide students with construction skills training and the critical information needed to be effective within their companies and organizations.

### CEI DBE Supportive Services

Call 800-423-7058 or visit us online at [www.wvdbesupport.com](http://www.wvdbesupport.com)