

CEDAR, INC.
SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

FIRST PLACE ENTRY
2006

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Dear CEDAR Review Committee,

While reading my article, you should find an overview of gas prices being directly related to the coal market boom. I chose to select the feature article form for my submission because the information I presented was fact and not opinion. I wanted to achieve a goal of putting a unique perspective on old information while combining current events to highlight the new outlook on the present information. Some of the information came from my past research while submitting other CEDAR Coal Fair projects. Other facts were gathered from current events like President Bush's State of the Union Address, reading articles written in newspapers, and Internet searches.

Business leaders were my primary audience although I feel the general public, currently complaining about gas prices, would find this article interesting. It shows a silver lining to what they consider a black cloud; gas price increases. The article also teaches how national affairs affect us directly.

Conclusively, I hope this feature article shows my writing and research skills to be above the average high school senior's aptitude and that you might find me deserving of receiving a scholarship to further my education on a college level. I have a physical handicap called Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy Syndrome. My doctor and medical bills take a 6th of my father's mining income. I have already been accepted to Eastern Kentucky University for the fall 2006 semester. This scholarship could greatly assist me in my endeavor to achieve a college education in many ways.

Thank You for the many years of coal education you have provided. I have enjoyed learning about the coal industry and my family's involvement within the social aspect of our coal industry community. If not for CEDAR, I would never had learned what part I play, as a female, in the Eastern Kentucky coal fields culture.

Sincerely,


Heather Coleman

Economic Growth: A Historical Journey

Communities in the coalfields are repeating a historical journey. The government's commitment to move the nation beyond a petroleum-based economy is a repeat of policies during the 1970's OPEC Oil Embargo. This brought opportunities to industries using natural resources abundant in their areas such as coal or natural gas. People, such as my parents, remember what our economy was like then and are optimistic about the mining industry's future.

Although the oil rich countries are oceans away, their economic decisions impact Eastern Kentucky. During the Oil Embargo of the 70's, OPEC decided to raise the price of oil per barrel, which at the time was \$1.40. The price raised 70% to \$2.38 a barrel, and eventually raised again another 130%. Today's gasoline prices have a direct link to "refueling" our community. Somewhere in life we are all taught that those who don't learn their history, are doomed to repeat it! This is one time that we would not be doomed but rather we should embrace the opportunity to repeat history.

When coal companies become a competitive energy alternative, Eastern Kentucky reaps many of the benefits. One of the most beneficial advantages of a booming coal market is severance tax. During 1972, the Coal Severance Tax was established. This tax levied on the tons of coal being mined. These taxes brought income for the state to provide necessary services for our community. The monies were and still are allocated to the County Judge Executive and Fiscal Court for programs like the senior citizens, water and sewer systems, roads, and economic development. All these programs allow for a bigger economic boost for other businesses we don't relate to the coal industry. Because

of the rise in infrastructure due to severance tax money, the businesses that are considered non-related really do connect with the coal industry.

Allocation of funds to Eastern Kentucky from severance taxes has brought business indirectly related to coal. Franchises for restaurants, retail stores, and the Eastern Kentucky Exposition Center are business that sprang up due to the services provided by the taxes. In turn, these provide jobs and more income for our area. The new Holiday Inn Express is already booked solid for Hillbilly Days, a local festival that raises money to provide the Shriners with funds to help children needing medical attention.

Directly related jobs in the coal industry were created from demand for uniform rentals, accounting firms, sign manufactures, rubber products, electrical supplies, and businesses providing roof supports just to name a few. With more production of coal come more employment prospects. Being that more residents are employed in a coal boom, there are fewer people without medical insurance, which is a common problem our nation faces. For prosperity to flourish you must have a demand for a product or service and a work force to supply it.

Before the coal boom of the 1970's our community lost employable workers to other large industries in the northern United States. Many skilled artisans returned during the coal boom for the positions now provided by a competitive coal market. Jobs outside of the physical labor of mining coal include technicians for water and coal samples, lawyers, machines, sales representatives, etc.

With the coal boom we are now experiencing, "The U. S. Department of Labor estimates that Kentucky currently needs 3,500 new miners to meet the industry's

demand.” (Bennett 1A, 3A) Companies like Sidney Coal Company requested that the state mining board make it possible to hire Hispanic, non-English speaking miners.

Citing the work ethic of the Eastern Kentucky workers has declined. Ultimately affecting the attendance and productivity. This is not the first time the coal companies recruited a work force. In the past, African Americans and Asian laborers were used to fill gaps.

Instead of migrating workers to Eastern Kentucky, many feel we can educate the present workforce. “Governor Ernie Fletcher presented a check for \$910,153 to the Pike County Board of Education and the Office for Career and Technical Education” (Goff 1,5) on January 23 to support the Pike County Mining Initiative. The initiative will offer students at the Belfry Area Technology Center the chance to earn certifications in four mining-related areas. Industrial machine and maintenance technology, industrial electricity, welding, and diesel technology are a few programs Belfry and Pike Central High School students can receive certification for under this program.

The Big Sandy Community and Technical College is currently training men to become underground and surface miners through its Coal Careers Program. “‘We have been impressed with these men,’ said Linda Lyons, spoke person for college. ‘They are always on time and very eager to work.’” (Bennett 1A, 3A) Apparently, Sidney Coal Company was wrong in the statements alluding to ethics of the Eastern Kentucky worker. They may find most workers just need training.

President Bush drew attention to our countries addiction to oil in his State of the Union Address on January 31, 2006.

“Bush’s Advanced Energy Initiative-a 22% increase in clean energy research. To change how we power our homes and offices, we will invest

more in zero-emission coal-fired plants. To produce the technicians that might bolster such energy research, Bush called for a federal education initiative to commit to basic research programs in the physical sciences.”

(Bash & Malveaux)

Such initiatives should filter down and have an effect on Eastern Kentucky’s coal markets and electrical plants.

Education of a future workforces social structure, economy, geography, and employment opportunities, along with sustaining the arts, has become the motivation for CEDAR (Coal Education Development and Resource Council). Made up of people within the coal markets, companies, and mining related companies to educate Eastern Kentucky students. CEDAR works within our school system, grades K-12, to educate youth about their culture. Throughout my many years of participation in the CEDAR Coal Fair, I have unveiled many beneficial aspects pertaining to the coal industry. CEDAR rewards hard work with monetary awards, a good life lesson. It also provides initiatives in the form of scholarships to high school seniors wanting to go to college.

What comes around goes around. Just like fashion, something most teenagers can relate to, things come in cycles. The price of a gallon of gas is favorably connected to our economy. In order to achieve a thriving coal economy, the price for OPEC oil must raise. Eastern Kentucky’s coal market boom of the 1970’s allowed for the expansion of schools and hospitals. We have noticed growth in tourism and entertainment. Coal booms also allow for wage increases, higher education, better health benefits, and superior infrastructure within a community and surrounding areas.

Civil War engineers accidentally discovered the immense bituminous coal seams in Eastern Kentucky. Captain Broas, the engineer, prospected the Ashcamp area in 1883 where he found an eight-foot coal seam. This was the beginning of our culture's coal history that is destined to repeat itself due to what I have deemed "The War over Fossil Fuel Prices".

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