

News
From _____

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

Statement of Congressman Nick J. Rahall

I am extremely pleased to be here this morning to take part in this important announcement, which means so much to our State and its people.

The combined commitments of National Steel, Elk River Resources, the N&W Railroad, the State of West Virginia, and the Federal Government, prove that although our nation is experiencing declining productivity, unemployment and inflation -- both business and government have no intention whatsoever to idly stand by.

Some may say that business cannot work with government, and others may say that government cannot work with business, but the announcement of this \$20 million coke plant to be built in southern West Virginia, exemplifies the partnership business and government have in keeping the United States strong.

I am pleased such cooperation exists, and feel confident in saying that this is only the beginning.

This coke plant brings together two of America's greatest assets: steel and coal. Both of these resources have been the foundation of this country's economy in the past, and will so even more in the future.

Steel is mankind's most important industrial material. It is essential to all modern societies. A nation's steel supply must be secure, and it is not secure if it is dependent to any significant degree on foreign sources.

Likewise is the case with coal.

At the present time, the United States continues its precarious reliance on imported energy, and in doing so, furthers the inflationary spiral and fuels the rising rate of unemployment.

This coke plant will play a major role in solving both problems.

American steel manufacturers are second only to America's utility companies in their use of coal, with an annual consumption rate of 67 million tons. Since two tons of coal are needed to produce every three tons of steel, the steel industry is obviously dependent on maintaining an abundant supply of coal, and I am pleased that the construction of this plant will mean an increase in employment at National Steel's mine in Pineville, in Wyoming County, where an estimated 700 miners will be brought on board.

The coke produced from this plant will mean a consumption of 320,000 tons of metallurgical coal a year, which is an important first step in expanding the direct use of southern West Virginia coal, an energy resource that OPEC doesn't control.

The efforts of Gov. Rockefeller, the efforts of Sen. Byrd, the efforts of Sen. Randolph, and the efforts of myself, will continue to bring about greater production and utilization of coal. This coke plant, as I said, is just one step in those efforts.

Just as business is committed to the revitalization of America's economy, so is government, and I can assure you West Virginia's government officials, on the State, Local, and Federal level, are strong partners in this endeavor.

Important in this enterprise are also the men and women who will make it all work. The builders, the steelworkers, the miners, and the railroad workers. Employment is the only economic policy that will simultaneously fight inflation and the inequities that inflation causes.

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RAHALL STATEMENT COUNTINUED

This coke plant, along with others, will employ West Virginians in good jobs, and in time will spur the economic development of this entire region.

I am proud to be here, becuae this event marks the continuation of American know-how, and the American willingness to go forward.

Americans have never backed away from a fight, and we never will.