

News  
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CONGRESSMAN

# Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

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## RAHALL SAYS U.S. EDA REVIEWING COAL ROAD FEASIBILITY

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Economic Development Administration is reviewing the Coal Roads project feasibility study application calling for funding of a new highway in Southern West Virginia. U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-W.Va.) recently contacted EDA Regional Administrator John Corrigan and issued his support of the application.

"The committee working on the Coal Roads project has agreed to incorporate into Coal Ways, Inc.," Rahall said. "Therefore, this newly created, non-profit structure will be eligible to seek and procure funding to move this project along."

The committee recently met with U.S. National Park Service Representative Joseph DiBello, at the request of Rahall and Senator Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.). DiBello discussed the assistance the NPS could be to the project.

"Basically, Mr. DiBello asked the committee to provide the NPS with information as to what direction it wanted to take and the types of services they needed," Rahall said. "Dr. Mack Gillenwater of Marshall University is preparing a response and I will work with the NPS in obtaining the necessary assistance the committee needs."

The next item on the group's agenda will be a regional meeting tentatively scheduled for late January. The meeting will include county and local officials of the study area which includes all or parts of eight counties in Southern West Virginia -- McDowell, Mercer, Wyoming, Raleigh, Fayette, Boone, Logan and Mingo.

Rahall stressed the importance of local participation in the early phase of the effort and added, "I am certain a lot of information exists in the area involved. The committee needs to gather all the historic data available, as well as receive information on what structures exist in the study area. There is no question that without the help of everyone, this will be a very difficult first step. We need every county and local entity involved."

The feasibility study the committee has submitted to the EDA predicts that if ten mining towns are upgraded to visitation status, an estimated 500 new service positions will be realized within a brief period of time. It is estimated that 1,000 positions could be realized once the project is implemented.

"The feasibility study we are seeking will nail down the viability of these figures," Rahall stated. "It will identify the areas that are prime for restoration and upgrading."

-30-