

News  
From \_\_\_\_\_

CONGRESSMAN

# Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
JANUARY 29, 1988

CONTACT: JERRY BURKOT  
202-225-3452

## RAHALL SAYS COAL MINING HISTORY SHOULD BE PRESERVED FEDERAL FUNDS TO HELP

Beckley, W.Va. - U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-W.Va.) announced today that the U.S. Economic Development Administration has invited the submission of an application by Coal Ways, Inc. to fund a feasibility study of the tourism potential of preserving those old coal mining towns in Southern West Virginia with historic significance.

At Rahall's urging, the EDA has asked Coal Ways, Inc.-- a non-profit organization of local officials and other interested parties--to formally apply for \$28,000 to conduct the study.

Rahall, who met with the group today in Beckley, believes that the region's culture and heritage can and should be preserved for future generations.

"The history of coal mining of this region is a story of struggle, of human sacrifice and of occurrences which have left their mark on the Nation as a whole," Rahall said. "Incidents such as the populating of the Pocahontas Coalfields in the 1890s, the rise of the coal barons at the turn of the century and the labor disputes of the early 1920s at places such as Matewan and Blair Mountain have helped form the heritage of this region. Even today, our way of life in southern West Virginia continues to be affected by this history."

According to the congressman: "Few vestiges of this era remain. I believe it is incumbent upon this generation to ensure that what does remain is not lost to further decay." He added: "My thought is to preserve for future generations an example of our coal mining heritage."

The EDA feasibility study, according to Rahall, will identify areas that are prime for restoration and upgrading. Today's meeting in Beckley included county and local officials representing areas which may be the subject of the study including all or part of eight counties in Southern West Virginia -- McDowell, Mercer, Wyoming, Raleigh, Fayette, Boone, Logan and Mingo.