

This is an advertisement

Today's faces of Kentucky coal

By way of explanation:

Today there is no such entity as a "typical" coal miner, even though many who work in th industry do so as part of a multi-generational family tradition.

Accordingly, in this series, we'll be profiling several individuals who are actively engaged mining and representative of a new generation of mining professionals within Kentucky's coal industry.

The adage, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again," must have been instilled in Randall Taylor as a child. As evidence: at Johns Creek High School in Pike County, Kentucky, Randall attempted to play both basketball and football. But, he remembers, "I was athletically-challenged, so those ventures failed...miserably." As a result, he applied his energy to academics and was voted by his senior class as the person "most likely to succeed."

Years later, after receiving dual Bachelor of Science degrees in Civil and Mining Engineering from the University of Kentucky, Randall applied for a job at McCoy Elkhorn Coal, where his stepfather worked for 23 years as a roof-bolter operator and beltman. Because there were no engineering positions available at that time, Randall worked elsewhere until he was hired in 1988 by Johns Creek Coal as its Chief Engineer. In 1992, Johns Creek Coal was purchased by McCoy Elkhorn, and Taylor was offered a position as an engineer. In '94, he was named Chief Engineer; he became VP/Operations in 1997 and was named McCoy Elkhorn's President in 2001. Today in that role he oversees 400 employees in 4 underground mines (with a total of 6 operating sections) and 2 coal preparation and loading facilities—primarily near Meta (Pike County), Kentucky.

Similar to the schedules of others being featured in this "new faces of coal" series, Randall Taylor's day begins early—meeting or talking with McCoy Elkhorn's mine and plant managers regarding the previous day's activity and plans for the day. Upon reviewing and approving the daily reports (safety, production, processing, and costs), he contacts the various department heads (engineering, land, safety, HR, shop, and warehouse) to see if they have any needs. As often as possible, Taylor goes underground to check on operations and talk with his co-workers.

What's the best part of his job? "The people. Initially, I migrated to the coal industry because it would provide rewards (both monetary and

advancement) for me and my family. I genuinely know that God has put me in this place to help meet the needs of the people: my co-workers, and those in the local community. Looking back, my best memories are of the people I have met while obtaining my education, first at Prestonsburg Community College (especially my Calculus professor, John D. Sammons), followed by my time at the University of Kentucky (Go Cats!), and now during my professional career. I remember the lessons I have learned from the skilled and resourceful people who know what it takes to get a pound of coal out of the ground and into a rail car. Today, when someone outside our industry asks me about a career in coal, I tell them this industry can be very fulfilling and rewarding and that we as an industry are providing a vital source of energy for our nation. And—I stress that the bonds and friendships they will form will last a lifetime."

When asked, "What can and should be done to help all Kentuckians better understand and appreciate its coal industry?" Randall Taylor has three specific ideas, "Educate, experience, and evaluate."

"First—coal needs to be integrated into our education system. The schools should incorporate coal units in their curriculum. The Coal Education Development and Resource (CEDAR) program is one program that tries to promote coal in our schools. The coal industry must continue to make investments in local schools and communities. Our children need to know about coal's past and what the future outlook is. Additionally, our leaders, both in government and other industries, need to be educated about coal."

"Next—the public needs to experience coal. It would be good for our children as part of their education to go on field trips to visit reclaimed surface mines and historic communities built on coal. Our governmental leaders need to visit members of the coal mining community to understand how their proposed laws and regulations will affect coal. Additionally, let's set aside a day—one day a year—



Randall K. Taylor

President & CEO McCoy Elkhorn Coal Corporation

Information on Randall Taylor:

Personal:

- Born in Pikeville, Kentucky; raised in the small community of Meta in Pike County
- Graduated from Johns Creek High School in 1978 from Prestonsburg Community College in 1980; and from the University of Kentucky in 1992—with B.S. degrees in both Civil and Mining Engineering
- Married to Kimberly Morrison Taylor; three sons, Joshua (20), attending Georgetown College, Lucas (13), and Adam (11)

Professional:

- Since 2001, President & COO of McCoy Elkhorn Coal, a subsidiary of James River Coal Company
- Licensed Professional Engineer, Commonwealth of Kentucky, 1985
- Licensed Professional Land Surveyor, Commonwealth of Kentucky, 1987

to celebrate Kentucky's coal heritage. Recognize the people who work in our mines so that millions of others can enjoy affordable energy. Acknowledge accident-free mines and workers. Remember those communities that were born because of coal—and a statewide Celebration-of-Coal Day could really help our citizens become educated and experience coal."

Finally, "The coal industry needs to evaluate its performance. Let's prepare an annual report card that describes how the industry has performed. We could be graded in the areas of safety, the environment, economic benefit, taxes generated, etc. I am sure there are other areas I have failed to mention. The industry needs to face the fact that the general public does not know, and truthfully may not care, where their electricity comes from. Many people describe coal as 'a dirty business' that pollutes our air and streams—and that as an industry, we do not care for the health and safety of our employees—instead that we only exist to profit at their expense. Nothing could be further from the truth."

Coal Facts

17,190 miners earning an average \$47,000 per year.

124 million tons produced in 2005, selling for \$4.9 billion.

73% of Kentucky's coal is exported out of state, bringing \$3.5 billion into Kentucky. 85 cents on each dollar stays in Kentucky.

91% of Kentucky's electricity comes from coal.

Kentucky has one of the lowest electrical rates in the nation because of coal.

The Kentucky coal miner is safer from injuries than the average Kentucky worker.



Never underestimate the power of coal.™

Paid for by the Kentucky Foundation.

For more information on Kentucky Coal visit www.kentuckycoal.com