



Western Kentucky Regional Training Center

Building Resilience in Coal-Impacted Communities

Presented By
Webster County Judge Executive
Steve Henry



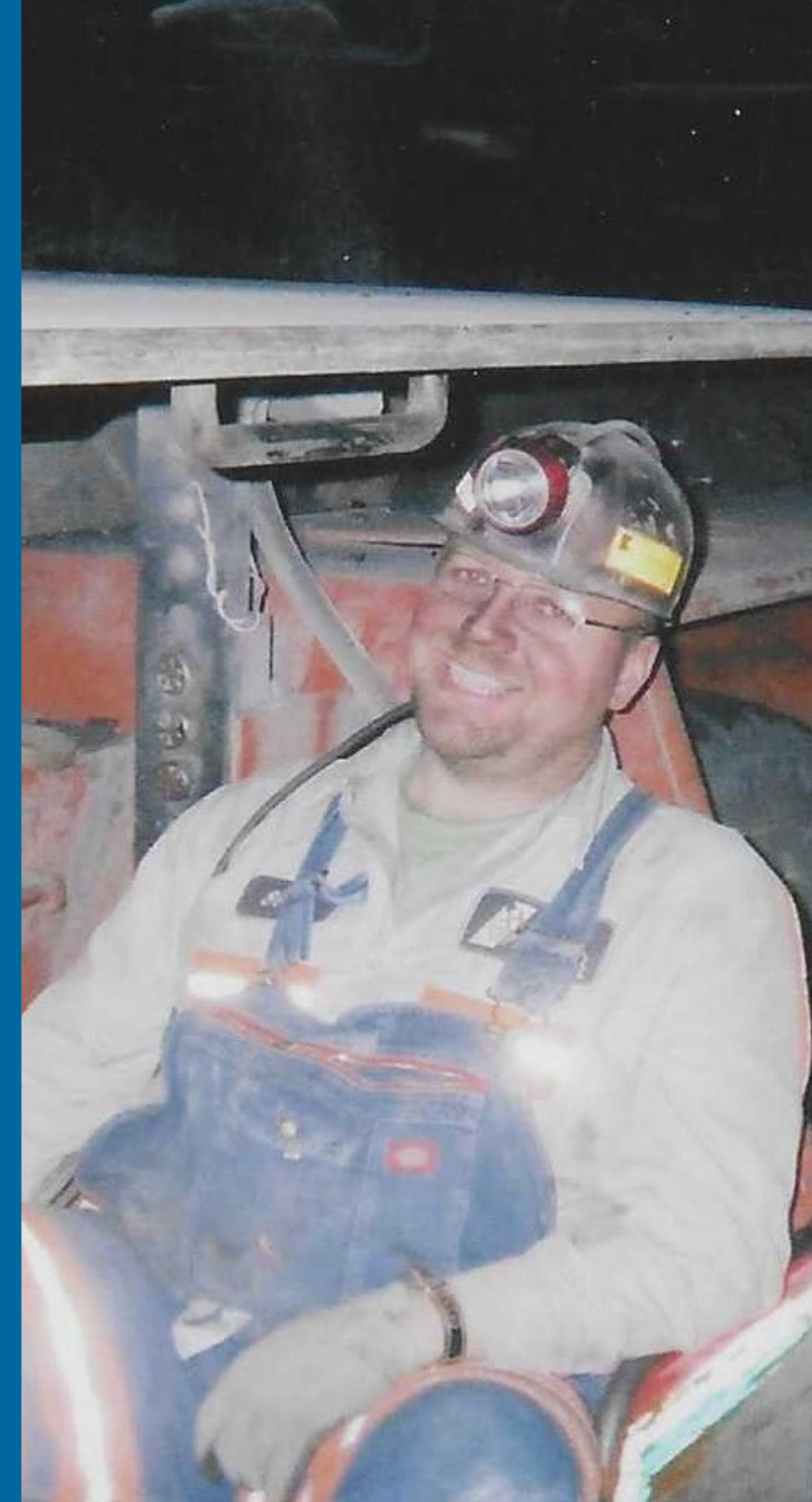
Project Overview

- Webster County Fiscal Court received a total of \$822,000 in grant funds to purchase an existing facility owned and formerly used by Alliance Coal for the Dotiki Coal Mine.
- Webster County Fiscal Court will partner with local community colleges to use this facility to offer training programs for extremely in-demand careers.
- This project is a resiliency initiative in response to the declining coal industry in Western Kentucky. This initiative was especially driven by the 2019 closure of the Dotiki Mine, the last coal mine in Webster County.



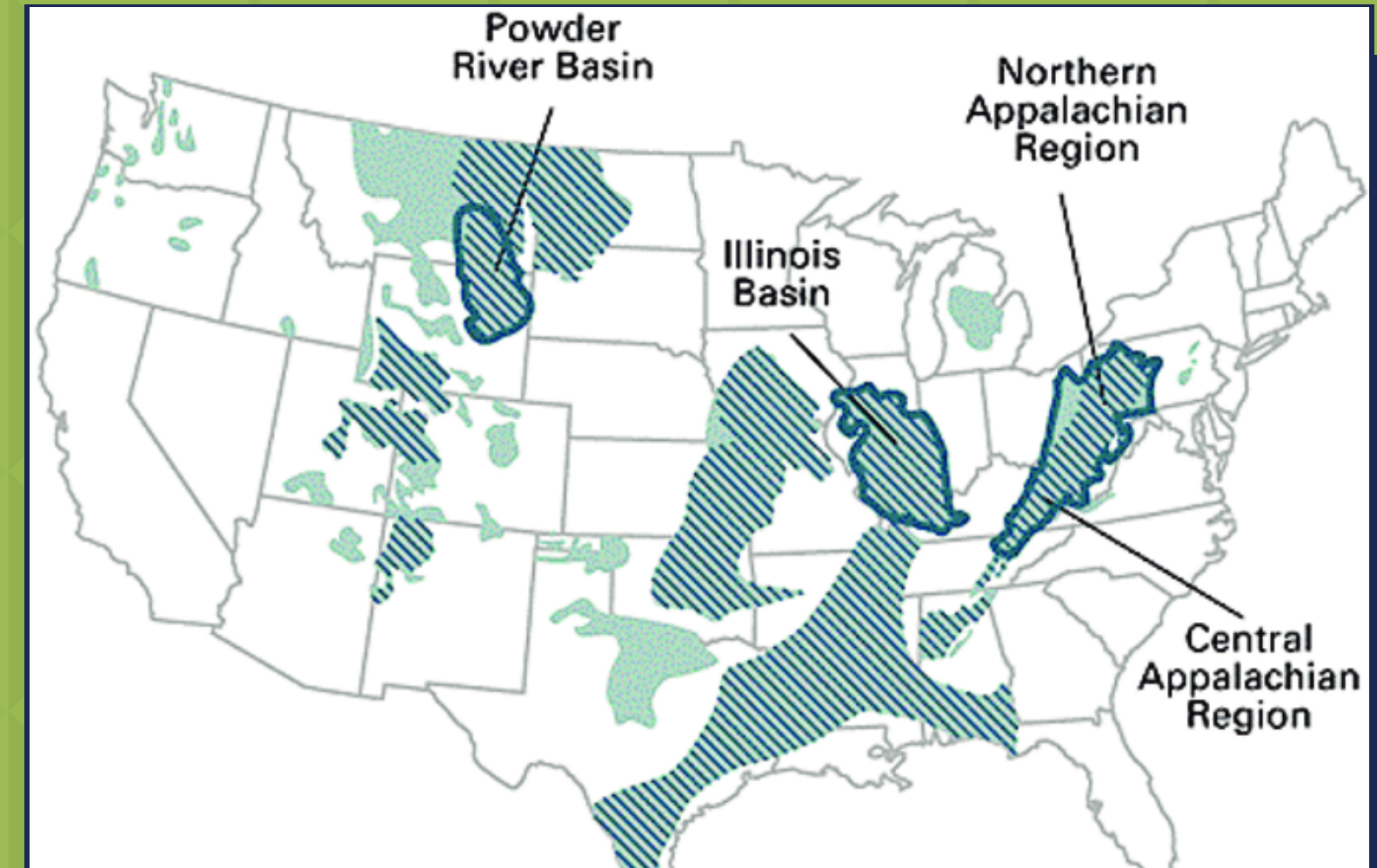
Project Overview

- Goals of this project include:
 - Strengthening the workforce in Western Kentucky
 - Diversifying the region's economy
 - Attracting and retaining industries
 - Providing job training to displaced workers
- The project supported two primary goals of the Green River Area Development District's CEDS:
 - Strengthening the workforce and increasing labor resilience
 - Establishing and promoting programs that teach critical technical skills for well-paying in-demand careers to raise the overall quality of life for residents and ensure workers can withstand the effects of economic change and layoffs.



Impact of Coal in Kentucky

- There are two distinct coal regions of Kentucky
 - Eastern or Appalachian
 - Western Coal Fields
- Coal mining has been an integral part of Kentucky's economy for over a century.
- Coal communities across the state rely on the coal industry.
- Coal miners in Kentucky earn more than the average Kentuckian. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, in the first quarter of 2021, coal miners had an average weekly wage of \$1,407, compared to the average weekly wage of all industries in Kentucky of \$973.



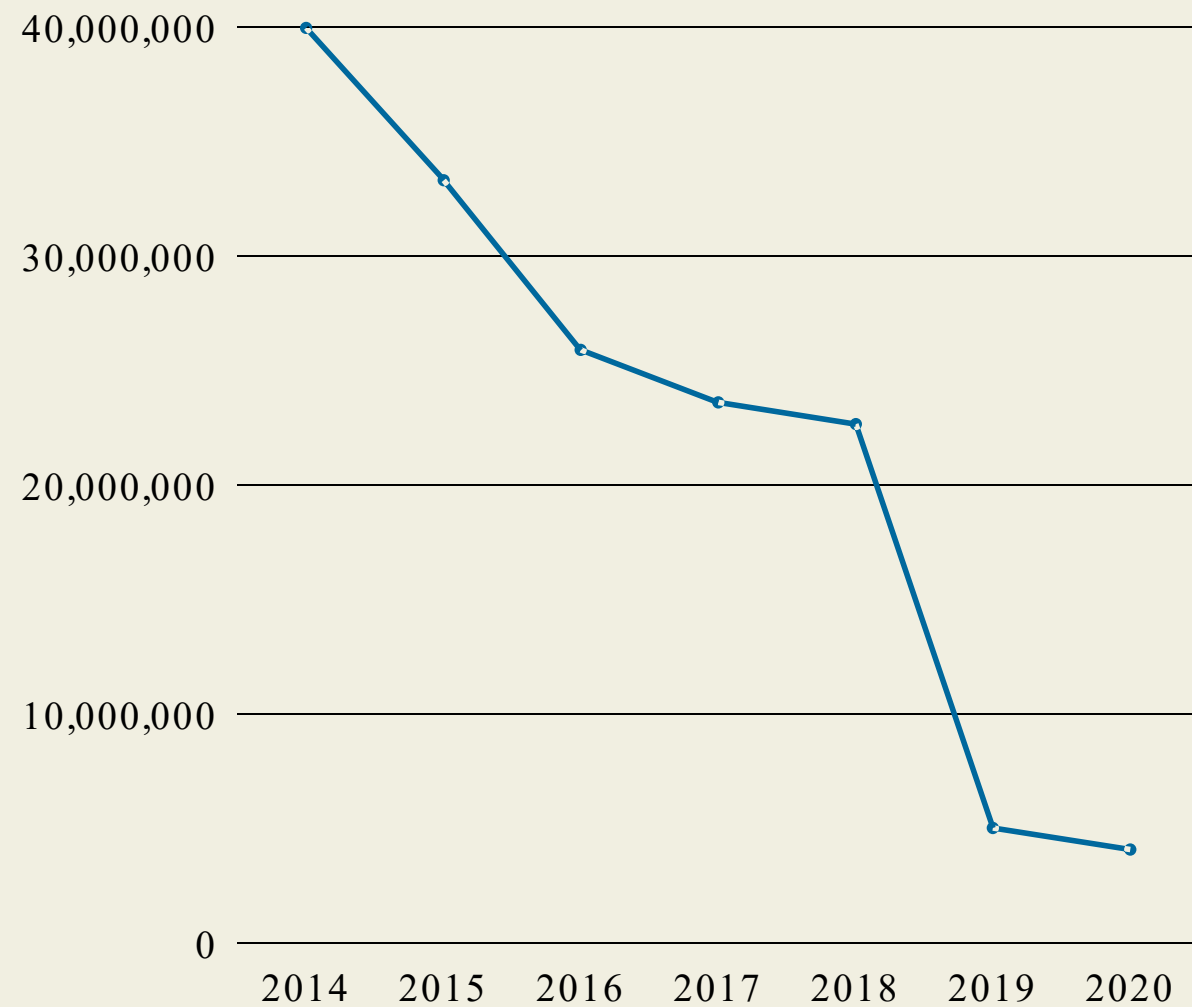
Impact of Coal Industry Decline

- Rising costs of production and use in power plants + decrease in demand due to cheaper alternatives leads to closure of mines.
- Displaced coal workers –
 - Find employment in another mine or plant
 - Can lead to population reduction as workers leave the region
 - Or, stay in the region and commute to nearby mines
 - Find employment in a new industry
 - Need training to have successful career in new field
- As the coal industry declines, need to retain & develop other industries.
- Workforce training programs help retain existing industries and attract new industries by supplying them with a pipeline of skilled employees.

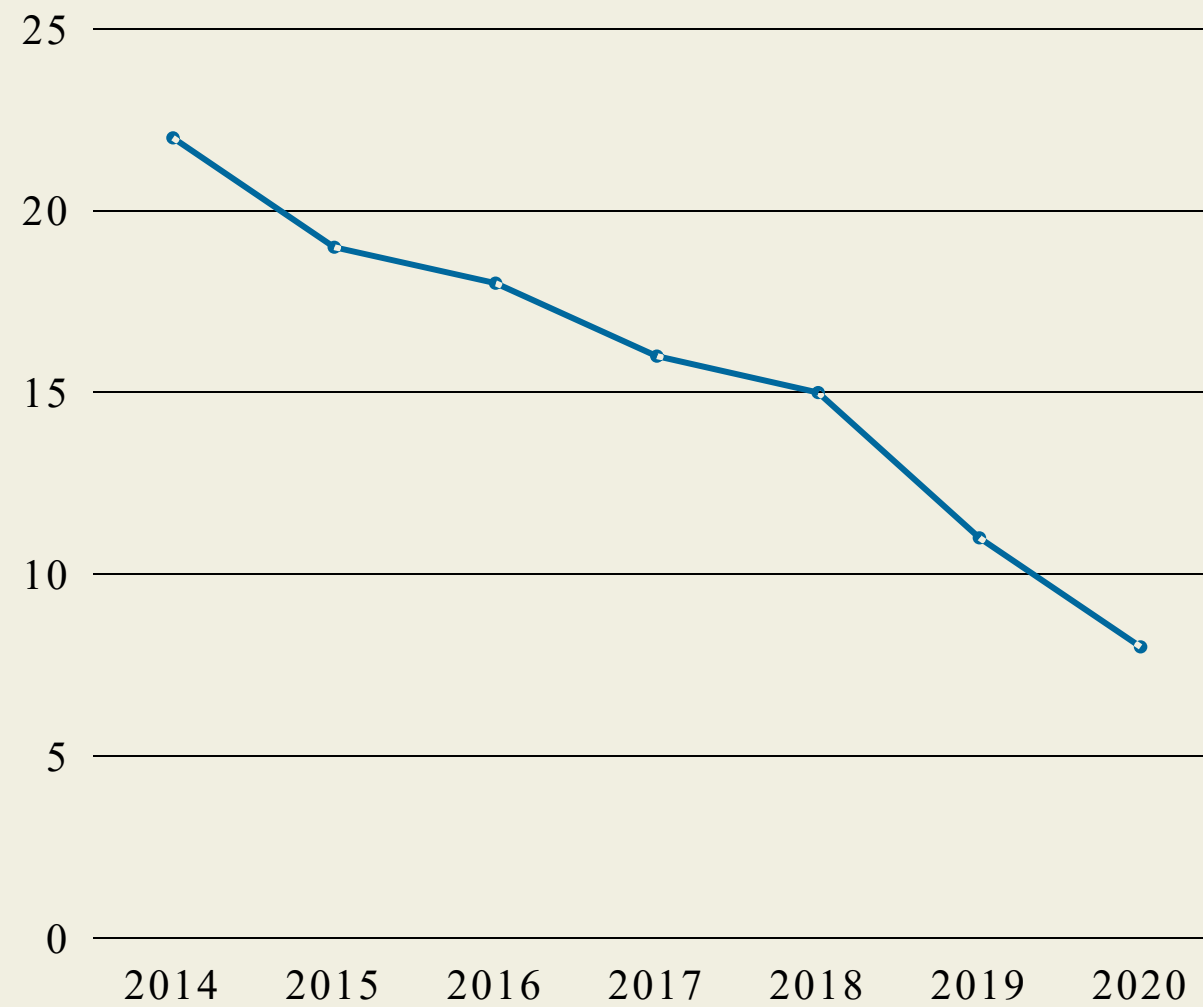


Western Kentucky Mine Data, 2014-2020

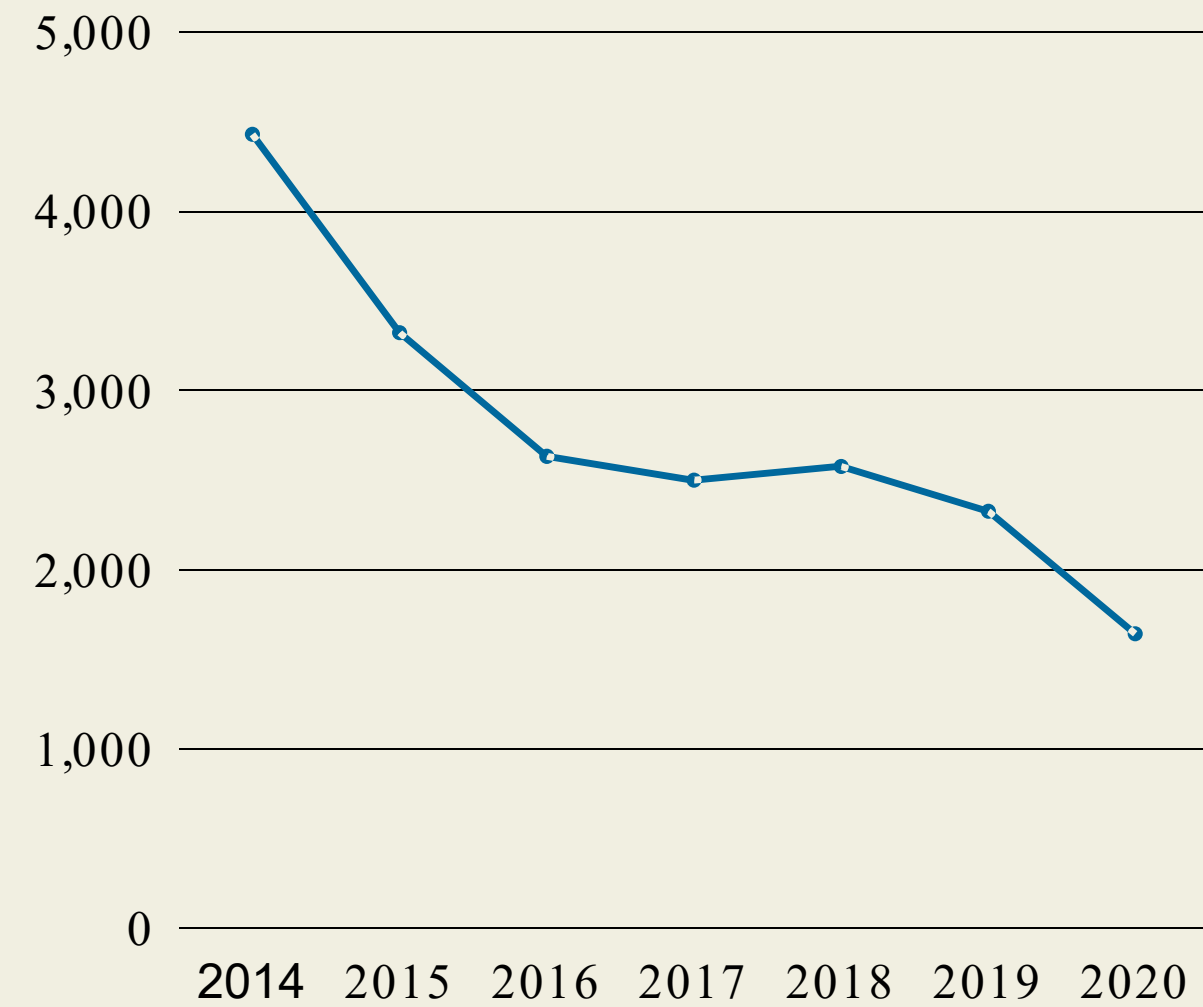
Tons of Coal Produced in Western Kentucky, 2014-2020



Number of Active Mines in Western Kentucky, 2014-2020



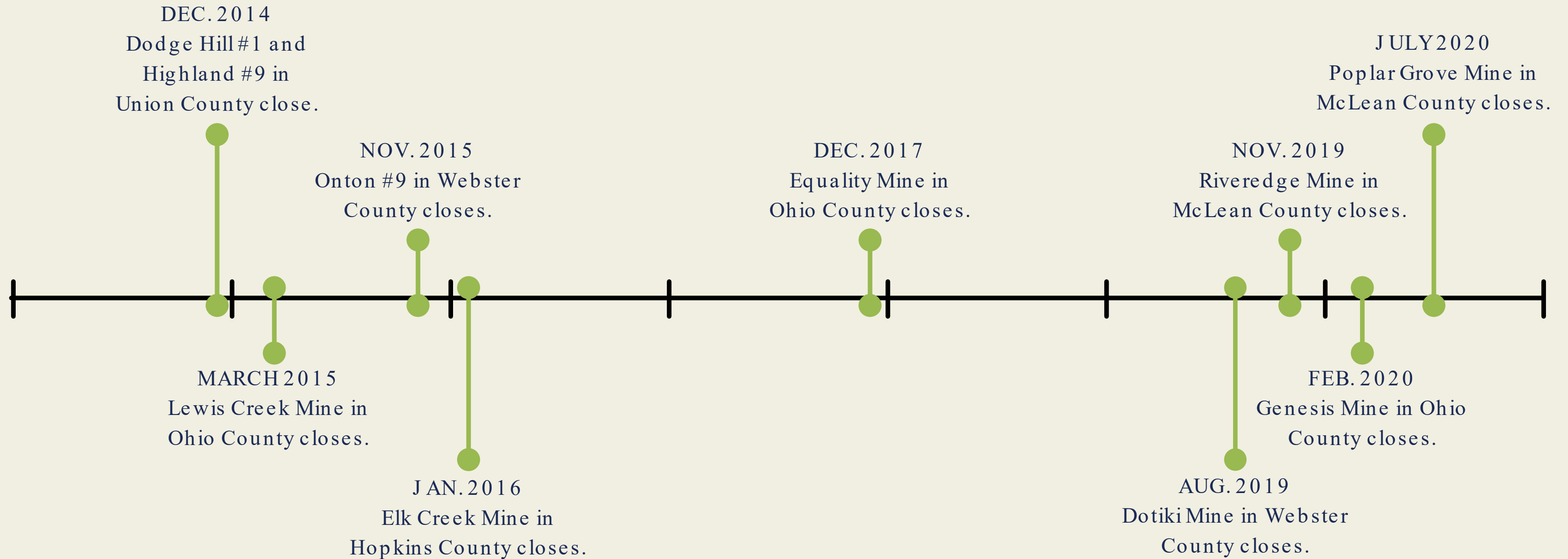
Mine Employment in Western Kentucky, 2014-2020



Sources

- Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet, Office of Energy Policy Quarterly & Annual Reports, 2014-2020
- Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet, Division of Mine Safety Annual Reports, 2014-2020

Time line of Major Mine Closures in Western Kentucky 2014-2020



Identifying Need

- Dotiki's closure in August of 2019 marked the end of coal mining industry in Webster County
- Need to develop workforce skills in other sectors and attract/retain other industries.
- Madisonville Community College in neighboring Hopkins County had a need for an additional facility to house highly -in-demand workforce training programs.
 - MCC utility lineman training program waitlist of 129 students in 2020 and CDL program with a waitlist of 25.
 - A focus group conducted by MCC in 2017 with 10 local utility companies showed strong preference for locally-trained employees
 - Because I-69, which connects Canada to Mexico, runs through the region, CDL certified truck drivers are in high demand.
 - Between September 2016 and May 2019, there were nearly 40,000 unique job postings in the region for truck drivers, with over 18,000 of them listing CDL certification as a preference or requirement.
 - MCC wanted to offer additional programs in in-demand areas, including a diesel mechanic program, but did not have the space to house the training equipment.



Partnerships & Funding

- Webster County Fiscal Court partnered with the Union County Fiscal Court to seek Community Development Block Grant funds to purchase former Dotiki site.
- Webster County Fiscal Court applied for Delta Regional Authority SEDAP funds as match for the CDBG funding.
- Partnered with Madisonville Community College and Henderson Community College to create and expand programs at the property
- The 20-acre property had six buildings that had been completely renovated in 2015 and would be ideal to house the programs.
- With assistance from the Green River Area Development District, both applications were funded and Webster County took ownership of the property in September 2021.



Project Outcomes

- Madisonville Community College and Henderson Community College will expand their CDL and utility lineman training to the Western Kentucky Regional Training Center, allowing them to provide training to more students each year.
- In September 2021, Madisonville Community College was awarded funding from the Department of Labor to create a diesel mechanic program at the new Western Kentucky Regional Training Center.
- The surrounding community has been receptive of the project and, along with the project partners, is excited about the creation of the West Kentucky Regional Training Center knowing that it will have a profound impact on generations to come.
- Another community has already reached out to learn more, and there is hope that the project will inspire similar projects in the region.
- There is also interest in eventually building an on-site dormitory to reach students that are not within commuting distance and adding to the type and number of programs offered.



Project Outcomes

- This project directly supports two goals outlined in the GRADD CEDS:
 - Strengthening the workforce and increasing labor resilience.
 - Establishing and promoting programs that teach critical technical skills for well-paying in-demand careers to raise the overall quality of life for residents and ensure workers can withstand the effects of economic change and layoffs.
- Project benefits coal-impacted communities in the Western Kentucky Coal Fields Region, including Webster, Union, Henderson, Hopkins, McLean, and Muhlenberg Counties.
- 223 new or enhanced jobs are expected to be created in the project area.
- Help the region's employers fill their labor force with skilled local individuals who are more likely to stay in the region, rather than skilled individuals who are not local.
- Help diversify the local economy as it shifts away from an over-reliance on the coal industry.
- Provide skills to residents to allow them to have successful careers in highly-in-demand fields.



THANK YOU!



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