



VIEWS & VISIONS

A publication of Bowles Rice LLP

Summer 2014



Building Upon Our Energy Assets in Mingo County

K. Steven Kominar, Executive Director
Mingo County Redevelopment Authority

K. Steven Kominar was appointed the executive director of the Mingo County Redevelopment Authority (MCRA) in January 2012.

He is a former member of the West Virginia House of Delegates, where he chaired the Committee on Banking and Finance. Mr. Kominar serves on the board of advisors at Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College and on the advisory council for the Mingo County Adult Education Association. Additionally, he is a board member of King Coal Highway and National Coal Heritage.

Mr. Kominar is a past member of the Tug Valley Chamber of Commerce board of directors. He also served as an MCRA board member from 2002 until his recent appointment as executive director.

He earned his bachelor of business administration degree in accounting and management from The Ohio State University. He received a master's degree in business administration from Park University.

"Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow."

—Melody Beattie



This statement captures the present dilemma in which Mingo County, West Virginia and other southern West Virginia coal counties find themselves. We have bragged about being "In the Heart of the Billion Dollar Coal Field" for generations but, now, we find ourselves on the outside looking in at the newer, cleaner and more expensive energy sources.

The mission of the Mingo County Redevelopment Authority has been to diversify our economy through partnerships with our coal producers and landowners, to create value and development of post-mine land after mining is completed.

The mission of the Mingo County Redevelopment Authority has been to diversify our economy through partnerships with our coal producers and landowners, to create value and development of post-mine land after mining is completed. This is accomplished by following our comprehensive land use master plan.

In Mingo County, we have substantial acreage made available by the past and present mining operations for which our area is so well known. We are grateful for this past commitment that today allows us to plan for the future.

Planning, initially, is evaluating and listing our county's assets. This has been a humbling experience. For decades, we have counted on the traditional coal industry, but under the present climate, this mega industry can no longer be considered as our core economic engine. Our assets include substantial developable land, fossil fuels and an abundance of renewable energy sources, with the exception of sustainable winds. We have a highway system that will allow for mobility in and out of our area. The Mingo County Air Transportation Park has a 5,000-foot runway and is open for business. Most importantly, our successful history with true public/private partnerships provides our county with an impressive track record for development success.

We have concentrated our diversification efforts in two main areas, the first of which is energy. While we are familiar with traditional energy sources, such as coal and gas, we have not pursued the other energy sources that are native to our land: biomass, hydro and solar. Our goal is to develop an Integrated Energy Research Center in Mingo County, by bringing experts from all energy disciplines to work collaboratively for a true all-in-one energy program. We also envision a practical application facility on post-mined land that can prove the applications presented from a research center.

Currently, we are involved in the development of a coal-to-liquid plant, to be located at the Mingo County Hybrid Energy Center. This process proves the value of coal as a value-added product

used for sources other than burning and creating electricity. This is not the only value-added product that can be derived from coal.

Our second area of concentration is agriculture. One of the most enlightening issues that we will be dealing with in the coming years is agriculture. According to the United States Department of Agriculture, our area is agriculturally barren. If our food chain were cut off due to some catastrophic event, our area would experience serious food problems, as would much of the United States. The food-insecure population in our state is extremely problematic. However, in working with Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College, Mingo County Schools, the West Virginia Department of Agriculture and others in the area, we are reenergizing local gardeners and working for the future of farms on post-mined land and possible commercialization going forward.

We are forming the necessary partnerships with the WV Department of Agriculture, Division of Forestry, Department of Environmental Protection and private entities to establish an agricultural park located on previously mined property. Water from the underground mines will be used to water livestock and provide for the growth of plants and crops. Waste from the livestock will assist in preparing the tillable acreage for future utilization for food crops and/or biomass products.

Building upon our assets, generated in great portions by our coal industry, allows us to develop new uses for our fossil fuels while proceeding with the energy sources of tomorrow...developing and integrating sources for economical energy of the future. W



The King Coal Highway in Mingo County, West Virginia.



Mingo Central High School, located adjacent to the King Coal Highway.