# REGION

# Trump's push to save coal gets a warm embrace in West Virginia

**FAYETTEVILLE, W.Va.** (AP) The winner of this year's West Virginia Coal Festival teen beauty pageant walks among the ruins of a community abandoned 70 years ago and imagines the rusted remains of coal tipples and processing plants coming back to life.

Ava Johnson knows West Virginia coal will not ever be what it once was. But as she makes her way along overgrown railroad tracks near the abandoned Kay Moor mine in the New **River Gorge National** Park looking for spikes for her collection, the 16-year-old history buff says she has heard people talking with hope about the future of an industry that has brought good-paying jobs to her state for the better part of two centuries.

'You can't appreciate being a true West Vir-

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

#### PUBLIC NOTICE **ORDINANCE NO. 22, 2025**

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF ASHLAND, KENTUCKY, AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING CHUCK D. CHARLES, MAY-OR, TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF ASHLAND, KENTUCKY AND USALCO, LLC FOR THE TANK LEVEL MONITORING SYSTEM INSTALLATION FOR THE DE-PARTMENT OF UTILITY OPERATIONS, DIVISION OF WATER TREATMENT PLANT AT NO COST TO THE CITY OF ASHLAND.

### **ORDINANCE NO. 23, 2025**

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF ASHLAND, KENTUCKY, AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING CHANGE ORDER NO. 1 BETWEEN THE CITY OF ASHLAND, KENTUCKY AND JUDY CONSTRUCTION COMPANY FOR THE ROBERTS DRIVE SCREEN REPLACEMENT PROJECT DECREASING THE CON-TRACT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$39,337.00 FOR THE DEPART-MENT OF ENGINEERING.

### \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* **ORDINANCE NO. 24, 2025**

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF ASHLAND, KENTUCKY. AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING CHANGE ORDER NO. 1 BE-TWEEN THE CITY OF ASHLAND, KENTUCKY AND LEIGHTY CONTRACTING, LLC FOR THE SIDEWALK REPLACEMENT PROJECT PHASE II DECREASING THE CONTRACT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$121,637.03 FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGI-NEERING.

#### \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* **ORDINANCE NO. 25, 2025**

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF ASHLAND, KENTUCKY, AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING CHUCK D. CHARLES, MAYOR, TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT BETWEEN THE CITY OF ASHLAND AND BOYD COUNTY SANITARY LANDFILL, INC. (RUMPKE) FOR A SUITABLE LANDFILL LOCATION FOR THE RECEIPT AND DISPOSAL OF COMPACTED GARBAGE AND REFUSE, RUBBLE AND RUBBISH, COLLECTED BY THE CITY OF ASHLAND FOR A PERIOD OF ONE (1) YEAR IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$22.24 PER TON FOR THE DE-PARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICES, DIVISION OF SANITA-TION.

### \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* **ORDINANCE NO. 26, 2025**

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF ASHLAND, KENTUCKY, AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING CHANGE ORDER NO. 5 BE-TWEEN THE CITY OF ASHLAND, KENTUCKY AND MECHAN-ICAL CONSTRUCTION COMPANY FOR THE 26TH STREET PUMP STATION REHABILITATION PROJECT DECREASING THE CONTRACT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$7,241.63 FOR THE DE-PARTMENT OF ENGINEERING.

ginian unless you realize that people risk their lives every single day to make ours better," she said.

Much of that renewed sense of hope is based on the actions of President Donald Trump, who earlier this month issued new executive orders aimed at reviving an energy source that has long been flagged by scientists as the world's most polluting fossil fuel, one that directly contributes to the warming of the planet.

Trump, who has pledged since his first run for the presidency in 2016 to "save coal," issued orders to allow mining on federal land and to loosen some emissions standards meant to curb coal's environmental impact.

"All those plants that have been closed are going to be opened, if they're modern enough," Trump said at the signing ceremony. "(or) they'll be ripped down and brand-new ones will be built."

The news was met with enthusiasm in West Virginia, where residents like Johnson say the coal industry is misunderstood and that they are tired of feeling unheard by their fellow Americans. But others do not think Trump will be able to fulfill promises he has made to some of his most loyal constituents.

Trump and his allies are "spinning a false narrative," said Tyson Slocum, who teaches energy and climate policy at the University of Maryland Honors College and is the energy program director for the nonprofit Public Citizen. He said market forces have shifted away from coal in ways that cannot be reversed, an opinion widely shared among economists.

"There's nothing that Trump can do that's going to materially impact the domestic coal market," Slocum said in a telephone interview.

"The energy markets.



West Virginia Coal Festival teen beauty pageant winner Ava Johnson, 16, collects small pieces of coal left behind at the former Kay Moor coal town and camp in the New River Gorge National Park and Preserve near Fayetteville, W.Va., on April 17.

the steel markets, have fundamentally changed. and learning how to adapt and how to provide the real solutions to the concerns and fears in coal communities would be a more effective strategy than promising them a return that isn't going to happen."

### At a coal exposition, renewed optimism

That was not the prevailing mood at a recent coal exposition in Charleston, attended by Johnson and many others who found encouragement in the Republican president's words, even if some expressed skepticism about his ability to make coal great again.

"For years, our industry has felt like it's been a little bit of a whipping boy, like a political, sacrificial pawn," said Steven Tate of Viacore, a company that makes an apparatus that helps mine operators limit the amount of coal dust in a mine. "We feel like we're finally starting to get the recognition that our industry deserves."

Some said Trump's orders demonstrated respect for workers who gave their lives in the mines -21,000 in West Virginia, the most out of any state — and for a resource that helped build America.

"Trump stood his ground all the way

through," said Jimbo Clendenin, a retired mine equipment specialist whose grandson started working in coal mining three years ago. "He said he was for coal. and a lot of people even a couple of them here in West Virginia said, 'I just think he said that to get into office.

"Now, nobody's got any doubt. He's for coal."

In recent decades, the Democratic Party's aggressive push toward clean energy led to the installation of more renewable energy and the conversion of coalfired plants to be fueled by cheaper and cleaner-burning natural gas.

In 2016, Trump seized on the issue, promising to end what he described as Democratic President Barack Obama's "war on coal" and to save miners' jobs. It helped in West Virginia, where a majority of voters in every county supported Trump in three presidential elections.

Trump did not bring the industry back during his first term. In West Virginia, which employs the most miners of any state, the number of coal jobs fell from 11,561 at the start of his presidency to 11,418 at the end of 2020, perhaps slowing coal's steep decline but not stopping it.

Slocum said Trump

a theoretical debate. It is a factual, scientific one, albeit one that does not occur within the current Trump administration."

Still, there is no doubt that the culture of coal is woven into the fabric of West Virginia. A miner can be a coal industry worker, but also a sports team mascot, an image emblazoned on the state flag or the name of a breakfast sandwich at Tudor's Biscuit World.

In the 1950s, more than 130,000 West Virginians worked in the industry, which then had a population of around 2 million. Production peaked in 2008, a year before Johnson was born. But by then, the number of coal workers had dropped to 25,000, mostly due to mechanization.

Heather Clay, who runs West Virginia Coal Festival's beauty pageant and social media, said losing coal jobs often six-figure incomes — was especially significant in a state with one of the nation's highest poverty rates.

"It's so much more than what people outside of West Virginia understand," she said. 'They're always saying, 'Shut down coal,' 'Shut down coal.' So you want to shut down our economv? You want to shut down our families? You want to shut down our way of life? and it has for a lot of people."

#### **ORDINANCE NO. 27, 2025**

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF ASHLAND, KENTUCKY, AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING CHUCK D. CHARLES, MAY-OR, TO EXECUTE AND SUBMIT THE 2025-2026 KENTUCKY PRIDE FUND RECYCLING GRANT APPLICATION TO THE KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTEC-TION, DIVISION OF WASTE MANAGEMENT, RECYCLING AND LOCAL ASSISTANCE BRANCH FOR THE HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE PROGRAM AND IF AWARDED, AUTHO-RIZING AND DIRECTING THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL OTHER DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE ACCEP-TANCE OF SAID GRANT; AND AUTHORIZING A 25% MATCH TO BE PAID BY THE CITY OF ASHLAND.

#### \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* **ORDINANCE NO. 28, 2025**

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF ASHLAND, KENTUCKY, AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING CHUCK D. CHARLES, MAY-OR, TO EXECUTE A CONSULTING AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF ASHLAND, KENTUCKY AND HARRISON CON-SULTING, LLC TO PROVIDE CONSULTING SERVICES AND OVERSIGHT OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF A CONFERENCE CENTER TO BE LOCATED IN THE CITY OF ASHLAND.

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

/s/CHUCK D. CHARLES MAYOR

ATTEST: /s/ SUSAN W. MADDIX CITY CLERK

ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS: March 11, 2025 READOPTED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS: March 27, 2025

### CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the title of Ordinance Nos. 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27 and 28, 2025 are true and accurate summaries of the contents of the ordinances prepared by the Legal Department of the City of Ashland, Kentucky, consisting of attorneys licensed to practice law in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

> /s/Andrew K. Wheeler Corporation Counsel

Subscribed and sworn to before me by Andrew K. Wheeler this 27th day of March, 2025. My commission as a Notary Public will expire January 2, 2028.

> /s/SAMANTHA A. SALYERS NOTARY PUBLIC STATE OF KENTUCKY AT LARGE ID# KYNP508 Published: April 28, 2025

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

### COMMUNITY HOSPICE, INC. NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

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This statement is in accordance with the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and Regulations of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services issued pursuant to these statutes as Title 45 Code of Federal Regulations Parts 80, 84, and 91.

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#### Chinese

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can defang the federal **Environmental Protec**tion Agency and deregulate mining, but he cannot save coal.

"It's not the EPA, it's not Democrats that declared this war on coal," Slocum said. "It was capitalism and natural gas. and being honest about the reasons for coal's decline is the least we can do for coal-dependent communities instead of lying to them, which the Trump administration is doing. Sometimes people want to believe a lie, because it's easier than facing a hard truth."

### A steady decline in jobs

In 2009, the EPA found that planet-warming greenhouse gases put public health and welfare in danger, a determination that new EPA chief Lee Zeldin has urged Trump to reconsider. Scientists oppose Zeldin's push, and Slocum said the endangerment finding and the need to move away from coal dependence "is not

### Innovation, not elimination

Trump and coal industry advocates say keeping coal in the U.S. energy portfolio is essential for maintaining the power grid, servicing growing demand from innovations like artificial intelligence centers and keeping America energy-independent.

But John Deskins, director of the West Virginia University Bureau of Business and Economic Research, said it would take a significant shift in the underlying economics for it to make financial sense for utilities to build new coalfired plants.

Natural gas is cleaner and cheaper, he said, and it's the direction most utilities are moving in. Earlier this year, First Energy announced plans to convert its two remaining coal-fired power plants to natural gas.

Johnson wears the sash and crown from her pageant victory over a black dress and sneakers as she traipses through the ruins of the abandoned Kay Moor mine. She talks enthusiastically about the industry's past, but also, occasionally, about what she thinks could be a brighter future for coal in West Virginia because of what Trump has done.

'I think that it will positively impact not just the industry," she said, "but people's lives."

## weekdays **Phone:**