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Coal a big fuel for Colorado's Yampa-White River regional economy

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Northwest Colorado – The economic development directors of Moffat, Rio Blanco and Routt Counties announced today the release of a report outlining measures of the economic activity associated with coal mining and associated electrical power generation in the three-county Yampa-White River Region of Northwest Colorado. The report, ***Measurement of Economic Activity for Coal Industry and Electrical Power Generation Industry***, prepared by economist Gary Horvath, with primary funding from the Economic Development Council of Colorado and sponsorship by the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, is intended to establish a shared and objective set of metrics to educate communities about the economic impacts of the coal and electrical power generation industries and inform public policy discussions about the future of the coal industry.

Coal-Related Economic Measures

Surface and subsurface coal mining directly employs 4.6% of the region's total employees and accounts for 17.4% of the region's direct output. Coal mining provides 1,545 direct jobs at an average wage of \$85,481, and total employment (direct and indirect) of 3,149 jobs out of the region's total employment of 33,411. The coal mining sector contributes \$478.6 million to the region's Gross Regional Product. Electrical power generation within the region, which uses both coal and gas as fuel sources, accounts for an additional 571 direct jobs and total employment of 1,233, with direct output of \$441.3 million and total output of \$519.3 million.

The report observes that the coal industry "provides a strong foundation of primary jobs based on the introduction of wealth from outside sources and strong output from the coal mining companies," with a much higher output per employee than other industries, and significantly higher average wages than the state average.

The report does not include fiscal impacts. In a separate analysis of county assessor data, Yampa Valley Data Partners reports that taxable coal mine property accounts for 8.6% of property tax revenue in Moffat County; 2.1% in Rio Blanco County, and 5.6% in Routt County.

For a copy of the full report, please visit www.craigbusiness.com

About the Yampa-White River Region's Coal Industry

The region's coal fuels power plants and associated economic activity throughout the world. The region's producing coal mines include Peabody Energy's Twentymile Mine in Routt County, Western Fuels Association's Colowyo Mine in Moffat and Rio Blanco Counties, Trapper Mining, Inc.'s Trapper Mine in Moffat, and Blue Mountain Energy's Deserado Mine in Rio Blanco County. Electrical power generation stations within the boundaries of the three counties include Xcel's Hayden Generation Station in Routt and Tri-State's Craig Station in Moffat. The Bonanza Plant in neighboring Utah also provides power and employment within the region, however, its' economic activity is not included.

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