

WEST VIRGINIA LOSES COAL JOBS



Green energy gets a lot of the media coverage these days, but despite the fact remains that the workers in these not clean sources of energy do employ a fair number of workers, and they employ a category of workers who have had a significantly harder time finding new work when things get rough. They are known as the low-skilled labor market, and for those of you who are not familiar with that term the low-skilled worker can be defined in the [following terms](#) : "...low skilled group provides an overview of the complexities involved in measuring skill levels. It considers measurement of basic skills but the focus is on skill level measured by academic or vocational qualifications. We describe the characteristics of individuals in this group, as well as the characteristics of low skilled jobs." This category of jobs, while they may require some special skill, have been among the hardest hit in the current economy. Over the weekend job cuts are getting ready to be made by some of these non-green employers who have primarily lower skilled workers. The first of the bad news is coming courtesy of Alpha Natural Resources. Late on Friday they announced plans to let several of their Appalachian coalmines sit idle. In addition to closing some of the mines they are also going to reduce the amount of workers, and hours at the mine. The company, which is citing a decreased demand for coal, as a reason to let go of work. On the whole about 320 workers in the Appalachian coal mines will be out of a job in order to satisfy the lower demand. The day before that another coal producer, Patriot Coal, is going to close down its Big Mountain complex in order to deal with a drop in demand. At the current moment we do not have any data about how many jobs are going to be cut with that closure. Some specifics of the Alpha Natural cuts were given to a reporter for the [West Virginia Gazette](#) by Ted Pile, a spokes person for the company: "West Virginia: - #2 Gas mine in Kanawha County is being idled immediately as is the Randolph Mine in Boone County. Both are underground. -The Black Castle surface mine in Boone County is reducing its work hours - Camp Branch surface mine in Logan County is reducing work schedules -Progress/Twilight surface mine is cutting back work schedules (Boone Cty.) -Alloy Powellton mine in Fayette County s eliminating one underground section Kentucky: - the Cave Spur and Perkins Branch underground mines are idled immediately. Both are in Harlan County. - the Coalgood surface mine in Harlan County will be phased out by the middle of this year and the Big Branch West surface mine in Knott County will close in early 2013." On the bright side the company has been able to offer a number of workers other positions, and about 234 people have been given the offer of some kind of a job with their company, though it may not be as geographically desirable or at the same rate of pay.

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