



College of Arts & Sciences  
**Community & Natural Resources Institute**  
**UtahStateUniversity.**

# 2025 Coal Country Community Survey

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*Descriptive Report*

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# Introduction

In spring of 2025, residents of Carbon and Emery counties in Utah were invited to take an online survey. The survey was created by modeling it after national mental health and wellbeing surveys, topics that came up in our own preliminary interviews, and by sampling questions and ideas from two different research projects:

1. Koci, Kristen & Ulrich-Schad, Jessica & Flint, Courtney & Yaughner, Ashley & McIntosh, Amanda & Murza, Gabriela & Hunt, Aaron. (2024). Raising Awareness of the Link Between Coal Mining and Mental Health. *Outcomes and Impact Quarterly*. 4. 10.59620/2995-2220.1081.
2. Considine R, Tynan R, James C, Wiggers J, Lewin T, Inder K, et al. (2017) The Contribution of Individual, Social and Work Characteristics to Employee Mental Health in a Coal Mining Industry Population. *PLoS ONE* 12(1): e0168445. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0168445>

These two projects also influenced the strategy for distributing the survey. We printed off fliers with QR codes that were distributed at community events, hearings, and county fairs, and we hung them up around town at sites like public libraries, grocery stores, county offices, and post offices. We also used an email listserv that went out to faculty and students at Utah State University (USU) Eastern. After data cleaning we had approximately 88 respondents. It is important to mention there was a limitation in that the survey respondents were overwhelmingly from students and staff at USU Eastern and underwhelmingly from coal miners and their spouses.



# Findings

## Section 1. Community & Jobs

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**Question 1.** If there was one thing that you wish people understood about your community and what it needs, what would it be? (N=55)

Respondents most frequently discussed job creation and economic diversification, followed by community resources for youth, inclusivity and local attitudes, and energy-related identity tensions. Across themes, people emphasized the need for balance between economic opportunity, community wellbeing, and preserving local identity.

### 1. Employment and Economic Diversification (N=17)

- “Along with most other people we need more jobs. There is strong ties to mining and manufacturing jobs... but it lacks jobs for those in other areas like business, accounting, marketing...”
- “Better options for employment.”
- “Economic development.”
- “Economic diversification.”
- “Employment and affordable housing so the young people can stay in our communities...”
- “Growth, Carbon and Emery County is the heart of the western United States coal industry.”
- “Job opportunities.”
- “Jobs for highly educated people, public transportation, environmental consideration, planning and zoning...”
- “Jobs, we need jobs that can interest and support our younger generations...”
- “More Industry!”
- “Needs more jobs.”
- “New source of clean energy that also supplied an economic boost through employment...”
- “Sustainable industry.”
- “That tourism is not beneficial to rural counties, and Industry is the only way to attract people...”
- “We need good career opportunities that will bring families to the area.”
- “We need job growth opportunities...”
- “We need jobs so our kids can come home.”

### 2. Community Resources, Recreation, and Youth Activities (N=8)

- “I don’t think we need jobs necessarily, but we need things that people can do to stay out of trouble... safe areas for kids... activity places teens can go.”
- “Mental health/Substance abuse treatment that is affordable and confidential... also... places for youth to just hang out.”
- “More recreational activities for families, young children and older children... a larger library... lack of positive productive things to do.”
- “We are a small county that needs just more things to do.”
- “We need more healthy activities for our tween/teens.”
- “We need date night activities.”
- “With our growing community, I think we need more resources in our hospital.”

- “People taking more initiative to get projects done.”

### **3. Community Attitudes, Cohesion, and Inclusion (N=8)**

- “Community of deep roots. It needs to feel like local government cares about the population.”
- “Diversity. Beautiful area but the people are non progressive.”
- “I think Carbon greatly needs more resources and also a better understanding/acceptance of people in need or people different from oneself.”
- “The entire county is leery of ‘outsiders,’ even though that’s a belief that stems back to the depression days.”
- “The friendly vibe – people wave at each other and are always willing to help you.”
- “This is a community that knows how to come together in times of need.”
- “That this is an amazing place with amazing people. We should be uplifting this community...”
- “That it’s a beautiful place with lots of diversity... The area and people have value outside of the energy industry.”

### **4. Coal, Energy, and Environmental Perspectives (N=7)**

- “An increased awareness of environmental impacts and overall policy impacts.”
- “I wish that people of this state would realize that the power plants and coal mines in our area are important...”
- “That coal is clean and a valuable power source.”
- “That coal is essential to have a community here.”
- “That we don’t want more pollution just to get jobs here.”
- “We need a balanced energy approach, value what we have but be open to blending in the new.”
- “New source of clean energy that also supplied an economic boost...” (*also counted in Economic Diversification due to overlap*).

### **5. Local Business and Infrastructure Improvements (N=5)**

- “More accessible convenient stores.”
- “More people—growth—to support businesses, open new businesses, bring new ideas.”
- “More quality local businesses for shopping, recreation, and dining...”
- “Needs new/young blood in community planning, and new sidewalks.”
- “That it’s a great place to come and start a business in areas that are lacking such as non fast food restaurants, shops, builders and subcontractors.”

### **6. Identity, Pride, and Connection to Place (N=4)**

- “I like it the way it is.”
- “That we are a small town. We do not need fancier buildings or temples...”
- “We are part of Utah. The state line does not end at Spanish Fork on the east side.”
- “That we are a very rural community who have a lot of resourcing needs, especially for our most vulnerable populations, like the aging.”

### **7. Drug Use, Youth Behavior, and Social Concerns (N=2)**

- “I wish that people would look into the drug problem more, and relate it to the lack of things to do.”
- “More recreational activities for families... troubled teens... lack of positive productive things to do...” (*also referenced under Community Resources*).

**Question 2.** What county do you currently reside in? (N=87)

	Percentage
Carbon County	59.8%
Emery County	34.5%
Other, please specify: Salt Lake; Sevier; Tooele; Weber	5.8%

**Question 3.** Have you ever worked in the coal mining or supporting industries (power plant, fabricate for coal mines, trucking for coal mines, etc.)? (N=44)

	Percentage
Yes	45.5%
No	54.5%

**Question 4.** Besides you, does anyone in your household currently work in coal mining or supporting industries (power plant, fabricate for coal mines, trucking for coal mines, etc.)? (N=44)

	Percentage
Yes	29.6%
No	70.4%

**Question 5.** Besides you, has anyone in your household previously worked in coal mining or supporting industries (power plant, fabricate for coal mines, trucking for coal mines, etc.)? (N=44)

	Percentage
Yes	45.5%
No	54.5%

**Question 6.** What is your current employment status? *Please select all that apply.* (N=88)

	Yes	No
Employed full-time for wages	65.9%	34.1%
Employed part-time for wages	15.9%	84.1%
Self-employed	8.0%	92.0%
A volunteer working at least 20 hours/week	0%	0%
Out of work and looking for work	1.1%	98.9%
Out of work but not currently looking for work	0%	0%
Homemaker	8.0%	92.0%
Student	14.8%	85.2%
Military	0%	0%
Retired	8.0%	92.0%
Unable to work	0%	0%
Other, please specify: Education; Part-time swim coach; sub-contractor in construction	3.4%	96.6%

**Question 7.** What industry do you currently work in? (N=77)

Coal mining	2.6%
Coal-powered power plant	14.3%
Other supporting industry of coal mining (fabricate for coal mines, trucking for coal mines, etc.)	5.2%
Trade job related to coal mining	2.6%
Education (i.e., school district or Utah State University)	42.9%
Medical field	6.5%
Retail or service industry	8.0%
Other, please specify: Aviation industry; Childcare provider; Clean energy; Community health; Credit, Debt Collection; Farmer; Grocery store; Drug Rehab; Non-profit; Operation specialist; Partner success manager; City; Adjunct professor	16.9%

## Section 2. WORKING IN COAL

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**Question 8.** How many hours do you currently work in a typical day? (N=2)

7 or less hours	0%
8 hours	0%
9-10 hours	0%
11-12 hours	50.0%
13 or more hours	50.0%

**Question 9.** How many days do you currently work in a typical week? (N=2)

3 or less	0%
4 days	50.0%
5 days	0%
6 days	50.0%
7 days	0%

**Question 10.** How many years have you been working in the mining industry? (N=2)

Less than 1 year	0%
1-4 years	0%
5-9 years	50.0%
10-30 years	50.0%
30 or more years	0%

**Question 11.** What factors played a role in your decision to work in the coal mines? (N=2)

- “Money .”
- “The wages and love of the industry.”

**Question 12.** What are your thoughts on the 40-hour Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) training required for beginning miners? (N=2)

- “I think it should be a week long class for new miners.”
- “It’s a good thing.”

**Question 13.** What would be important to you in considering taking a job, still in the energy industry, but outside of coal?? (N=2)

- “Wages would be number 1.”
- “Money.”

**Question 14.** How much do you agree or disagree with each statement with regards to your current job in the coal mining industry?

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
I'm not paid enough for the work that I do. (N=2)	0%	0%	0%	50.0%	50.0%
I am nervous about losing my job due to alternative energy industries and/or public policy. (N=2)	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
I feel that I am overworked. (N=2)	0%	50.0%	0%	50.0%	0%
My work schedule (shiftwork, odd hours) causes me stress. (N=2)	0%	50.0%	0%	50.0%	0%
I feel a sense of pride for my job and would feel broken if I lost it. (N=2)	0%	0%	0%	50.0%	50.0%
I don't get enough sleep. (N=2)	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
I am worried that I will be injured or put in danger at work. (N=2)	50.0%	50.0%	0%	0%	0%
I don't get enough time with my family or friends. (N=2)	0%	0%	0%	50.0%	50.0%
I feel like I can't talk about my mental health with my family or friends. (N=2)	0%	50.0%	0%	0%	50.0%
I feel like I can't talk to my coworkers about my mental health. (N=2)	50.0%	50.0%	0%	0%	0%
My job contributes to problems in my relationships. (N=2)	0%	50.0%	50.0%	0%	0%
I spend too much time driving/commuting to and from work. (N=2)	0%	0%	0%	100.0%	0%
I feel like an outsider at work (i.e., not having similar beliefs, lifestyles, humor, etc. than the dominate culture in my field). (N=2)	50.0%	0%	50.0%	0%	0%

### Section 3. COMMUNITY & WELLBEING

**Question 15.** How much do you disagree or agree with each statement about the community you live in?

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
My community is connected to each other. (N=88)	5.7%	11.4%	21.6%	47.7%	13.6%
There is plenty of opportunity for growth and promotion in jobs/careers here. (N=88)	25.0%	35.2%	14.8%	18.2%	6.8%
We need more diverse industries and economic opportunities. (N=88)	2.3%	0%	6.8%	34.1%	56.8%
The community should be more involved in decision-making. (N=87)	2.3%	0%	12.6%	31.0%	54.0%
I would love for more people to come live here. (N=87)	10.3%	23.0%	16.1%	27.6%	23.0%
My community is open to change. (N=88)	21.6%	31.8%	17.1%	25.0%	4.6%
I would like to be more informed about my community, its industries, and future. (N=88)	1.1%	3.4%	14.8%	34.1%	46.6%
People in this community take care of each other. (N=88)	1.1%	0%	12.5%	28.4%	58.0%
My employment prevents me from leaving here. (N=88)	5.7%	11.4%	18.2%	43.2%	21.6%
I would not move from this place due to ties to family, friends and/or neighbors. (N=87)	31.0%	20.7%	21.8%	16.1%	10.3%
This place is the best for what I like to do. (N=87)	16.1%	12.6%	23.0%	29.9%	18.4%
If this place changes too much, I might want to leave. (N=87)	4.6%	16.1%	17.2%	31.0%	31.0%
I would regret having to move to another place. (N=88)	19.3%	18.2%	23.9%	29.6%	9.1%

**Question 16.** What or who do you think currently makes the decisions regarding the local economy in your area? Please select all that apply. (N=88)

Community members	14.8%
Small business owners	23.9%
Corporation owners	31.8%
Local government (commissioners, council members)	88.6%
State government	51.1%
Federal government	34.1%
The President of the United States	14.8%
Other, please specify: "Power" people within the community; No idea; People are too busy and disenfranchised to be meaningfully involved; The VIPs of Price	4.6%

**Question 17.** Who do you think should make decisions regarding the local economy in your area?  
Please select all that apply. (N=88)

Community members	93.2%
Small business owners	68.2%
Corporation owners	20.5%
Local government (commissioners, council members)	78.4%
State government	29.6%
Federal government	4.6%
The President of the United States	2.3%
Other, please specify: Local government with community input; some federal services and protections	2.3%

**Question 18.** How often do the following cause worry, stress, or anxiety for you or your household?

	Never	Sometimes	About half the time	Most of the time	Always
Job security (N=88)	18.2%	29.6%	23.9%	10.2%	18.2%
Finances/making enough money (N=88)	5.7%	22.7%	17.1%	22.7%	31.8%
Housing security (having an affordable place to live) (N=88)	14.8%	25.0%	11.4%	26.1%	22.7%
Safety from accidents, injury, & death for myself and my family (N=87)	24.1%	43.7%	11.5%	12.6%	8.1%
Mine & my family's health and wellness (N=88)	6.8%	26.1%	21.6%	20.5%	25.0%
Access to adequate healthcare and health insurance (N=88)	8.0%	28.4%	20.5%	18.2%	25.0%
Access to quality education for myself and/or my children (N=88)	33.0%	21.6%	13.6%	9.1%	22.7%
Whether my children will stay here or move away (or the children of others if you don't have any) (N=88)	26.1%	30.7%	15.9%	14.8%	12.5%
Whether I'll have enough time to spend with my loved ones (N=88)	11.4%	34.1%	20.5%	11.4%	22.7%
Local politics (N=88)	12.5%	43.2%	19.3%	17.1%	8.0%
State politics (N=88)	9.1%	37.5%	30.7%	14.8%	8.0%
Federal politics (N=88)	10.2%	30.7%	26.1%	12.5%	20.5%
Other (N=22), please specify: Access to Mental Health Care and Community Support; Are the coal power plants poisoning us?; Economy, Environmental degradation; selling public lands; How many families are struggling in our town but we are more worried about buildings and pickle ball courts than things for families and jobs that pay enough to afford the rent they	22.7%	13.6%	13.6%	31.8%	18.2%

that bigger cities pay; Mental Health Access; No communication from leadership about decisions; Not having access to a variety of services (window repair, roof repair, etc.); Water and conservation; traveling for medical care, job; cultural activities					
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**Question 19.** Please rate the following on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very bad and 5 being very good.

	1	2	3	4	5
Your overall physical health (N=88)	0%	3.4%	22.7%	51.1%	22.7%
Your overall mental health (N=88)	3.4%	11.4%	23.9%	44.3%	17.1%
Your overall wellbeing (N=88)	0%	4.6%	21.6%	61.4%	12.5%

**Question 20.** If you experience a mental health condition, what barriers might you face that may stop you from seeking care? Please select all that apply. (N=88)

I don't have enough time.	36.4%
I don't have insurance or enough money.	23.9%
I don't know where to go to get care or resources.	15.9%
There aren't enough resources in my area.	35.2%
There aren't adequate mental health professionals in my area.	30.7%
I have doubts that it would help me.	28.4%
I feel like I may be judged by family/friends/coworkers.	25.0%
I am not certain if what I experience counts as a mental health condition.	17.1%
I am concerned a mental health condition might negatively impact my job or my ability to work.	11.4%
I do not trust mental health professionals.	10.2%
I do not trust the mental health industry.	15.9%
Other, please specify: Four Corners Mental Health is a joke; I don't have mental health issues; I have trained nearly all of the mental health providers locally and partner with them regularly. It would feel like a conflict of interest and I would need to go elsewhere.; I'm fine with my mental health; If you are in the VA healthcare system, good luck getting an appointment; NA, I have access online thru work; No barriers; None; None of the above; Not enough good resources in the area. Local resources are present but not appropriately trained and up to date on methods. Focus is too much on one area of mental health and not on service of the entire community.; Too expensive for private practice to be accessible.	12.5%

**Question 20.** If you experience a physical health condition, what barriers might you face that may stop you from seeking care? Please select all that apply. (N=88)

I don't have enough time.	37.5%
I don't have insurance or enough money.	34.1%
I don't know where to go to get care or resources.	9.1%
There aren't enough resources in my area.	35.2%
There aren't adequate doctors in my area.	42.1%
I have doubts that it would help me.	11.4%
I feel like I may be judged by family/friends/coworkers.	5.7%
I am not certain if what I experience counts as a physical health condition.	3.4%
I am concerned a physical health condition might negatively impact my job or my ability to work.	13.6%
I do not trust medical professionals.	8.0%
I do not trust the medical industry.	13.6%
Other, please specify: Ins doesn't work with quite a few specialists here; No barriers; No concerns; None of the above; Nothing. I trust and value our local healthcare team and facilities; Problems with the local hospital. I believe the people who work there are good, but the corporation that runs it seems to be a mess - outdated equipment, no pride in the facility, high costs; Don't have one	8.0%

**Question 21.** What best represents your current access to health insurance? Please check all that apply. (N=88)

Through my employment.	52.3%
Through the employment of a family member.	34.1%
A government program (i.e., Medicaid, Medicare).	13.6%
An individual plan purchased through the marketplace.	6.8%
I am currently uninsured.	3.4%

**Question 22.** Do you feel that your health insurance is inadequate to meet your needs? (N=85)

No	42.4%
Yes	48.2%
Prefer not to answer	9.4%

## Section 4. Energy Industries

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**Question 23.** Do you believe coal mining will be a part of your community's future? (N=88)

Yes	53.4%
No	21.6%
Unsure	25.0%

**Question 24.** Please describe why you responded as you did to the previous question about coal in the future of your community? (N=66)

Most respondents view coal as central to the area's economic and cultural identity, with strong pride in its historic role. However, a substantial group also express concerns about sustainability, diversification, and environmental impacts, reflecting an emerging divide between economic dependence and future-oriented transition thinking. Many see the future of coal as uncertain and politically driven, emphasizing the need for economic adaptation while maintaining community stability.

### 1. Coal as Core to Local Identity and Economy (N=23)

- "Again, our community was built on mining."
- "Coal has always been king in Carbon County."
- "Coal is and always has been needed to generate power."
- "Coal mining is what our community is known for and founded by."
- "Coal mining is integral to the area..."
- "Coal mining is a big part of the community and will probably be around awhile..."
- "Coal is a valuable resource and should be used as much as possible..."
- "Coal is a continuing energy resource that can be improved upon..."
- "Coal has benefits that other energy options don't."
- "Because if coal isn't part of our community then there need to be other industries brought in..."
- "Because it employs most of our area and it continues to grow."
- "Because it always has been. Not much changes in Carbon County..."
- "Because it can be a dirty and dangerous business but getting rid of it fully would destroy the local economy..."
- "Because it's a virtual certainty that mining will be part of this community's future..."
- "Emery County has abundant coal reserves. It would be beneficial to the county, state, and our country..."
- "It always has been."
- "It continues to be a major industry for working adults in this area."
- "It's not going anywhere. Especially under Trump..."
- "This area is a coal mining town at its roots. It probably will always be."
- "This community has very deep roots connected to the coal mining industry."
- "This is coal country and coal is how this place started and it needs to always be in the picture."
- "Without it we have nothing."
- "Because we would be idiots if we didn't work to keep the coal mines operating."

### 2. Transition, Diversification, and Energy Alternatives (N=18)

- "Because coal isn't part of our community then there need to be other industries brought in."

- “Coal mining is integral to the area but I’m open to a nuclear transition.”
- “Coal will run out. We need to be using renewable & sustainable energy.”
- “I don’t know that there is enough accessible coal in the area... new industries need to come into the area.”
- “In order for this community to grow... industry must be diverse.”
- “In the long term I believe that nonrenewable resources... are not sustainable.”
- “It may not be as robust as in the past but there is a need to have a diversified energy source.”
- “I don’t know if coal mining will disappear forever, but I do believe we need to diversify our employment opportunities...”
- “Too many people feel that working in the mine is the only source of income... Carbon County needs to diversify...”
- “Because of the way they want to implement solar and nuclear power...”
- “Coal mining will probably be around awhile but law could change that.”
- “I don’t see the need for coal going away, but nuclear energy is making its way into our community...”
- “I think all energy options make sense when handled well.”
- “It will play less of a role due to higher production from fewer employees...”
- “The future of coal is too uncertain. I’d like to see our economy move away from dependence on coal.”
- “There are many factors that influence the future of coal mining.”
- “We have the highest quality coal in the world and many new uses for it have already been discovered.”
- “Too dangerous and hopefully we will find a more safe and sustainable way to obtain energy.”

### 3. Recognition of Coal’s Decline or Unsustainability (N=14)

- “Coal is nonrenewable, it will not last forever.”
- “Coal is becoming a less used process for creating energy.”
- “I feel like it is a dying profession and resource. We have to find an alternative.”
- “I don’t feel that coal mining is a sufficient energy source for the future.”
- “I hope not. I worry about the emissions from the coal industry in this area.”
- “My father worked in coal mining for his entire adult life... coal is a dying industry.”
- “People are going away from burning coal because new resources are being used...”
- “Society no longer wants coal. Humans must stop spewing carbon.”
- “The demand for coal is decreasing. Simple economics would say if there’s less demand, there’s less jobs.”
- “The fact is the burning of fossil fuels and climate change go hand in hand...”
- “Unfortunately, there is not an infinite amount of coal in the earth...”
- “Coal will run out...”
- “Because we can only mine so much coal before it all runs out, and I believe in global warming...”
- “My family doesn’t live near a coal mine.” (*suggesting detachment from coal identity*).

### 4. Environmental and Climate Change Concerns (N=8)

- “Because we can only mine so much coal before it all runs out, and I believe in global warming, and the clean air act...”
- “I feel it should be [gone], but outside people, agencies, governments are trying to shut any coal or coal associated industries down.”
- “I hope not. I worry about the emissions from the coal industry in this area. Blue Sky Energy is smoking out our neighborhood.”

- “In the long term I believe that nonrenewable resources... are not sustainable for the climate.”
- “Society no longer wants coal. Humans must stop spewing carbon.”
- “The fact is the burning of fossil fuels and climate change go hand in hand...”
- “Too dangerous and hopefully we will find a more safe and sustainable way to obtain energy.”
- “Until we have the technology for other forms of power, coal powered plants are the best source... get the unsightly and inefficient solar panels out...” (*contrasting environmental views, but related to sustainability discourse*).

#### **5. Government, Policy, and Political Influences (N=7)**

- “Because it ebbs and flows based on federal policies...”
- “I do not believe that coal mining will go away entirely... based on policies put out by the government...”
- “This seems to be so dependent on the whims of the government.”
- “Political parties will influence a lot of coal production...”
- “Too many people feel that working in the mine is the only source of income... the productivity of the mining industry is controlled by Washington DC...”
- “Coal mining will probably be around awhile but law could change that.”
- “It’s not going anywhere. Especially under Trump...”

#### **6. Uncertainty, Mixed Views, or Need for More Information (N=5)**

- “I don’t know enough about it to have an opinion.”
- “I would hope so but I worry it won’t.”
- “Need more info.”
- “There are many factors that influence the future of coal mining.”
- “It may not be as robust as in the past but there is a need to have a diversified energy source.” (*also coded above due to ambivalence*).

**Question 25.** What role do you think politics, at the local, state, or federal level, plays in the coal industry in the area? (N=72)

Respondents overwhelmingly agree that politics—especially at the federal level—plays a major role in the coal industry’s fate. Thematic patterns highlight frustration with federal regulations, partisan divides, and bureaucratic obstacles, alongside recognition that local political traditions and “good old boy” networks maintain coal’s cultural and economic dominance. Many feel disconnected from decision-making processes and perceive political self-interest, money, or partisanship as shaping outcomes more than local community needs.

#### **1. Strong Influence of Politics at All Levels (N=23)**

- “A big role. It changes with every presidential administration...”
- “A large role. The more the laws change regarding climate change and renewable energy...”
- “Federal government plays a major role in the industry.”
- “Major role by state and federal.”
- “Politics at the Federal level play a huge part.”
- “Politics plays a large role in the coal industry.”
- “Politics plays a huge role in the coal industry because many political parties believe that we should move away from coal mining in this area.”
- “Politics can alter the way coal is mined...”
- “It depends if it is Democrat or Republican in office...”

- “Of course all levels play a part. As long as Republicans are in control the coal industry will continue...”
- “Local and State are fine, it’s at the Federal level that is concerning.”
- “State and Federal gov plays a huge role.”
- “Politics will always play a role in the coal industry...”
- “I think politics plays a very big cost [role] in this industry.”
- “It plays the role in decision making for the local community.”
- “I think politics at all levels plays a large role in where coal is allowed to be mined and sold.”
- “Significant.”
- “They determine what can and can’t happen in the industry.”
- “They push the narrative that supports the group that gives them the most money.”
- “Too much need to make decisions on more localized governing bodies.”
- “Too much of a role...”
- “Unfortunately politics totally control the coal industry...”
- “Way too much. Politicians bowing to environmentalist needs to stop.”

## **2. Federal Regulation and Bureaucratic Constraints (N=15)**

- “Federal overregulation has almost choked out the coal industry...”
- “Federal regulations and the time and permitting required is almost too much to overcome...”
- “Ridiculous emission regulations and MSHA overreach making mining onerous and expensive...”
- “Government can shut down coal plants.”
- “Oversight, approving leases and mine activity.”
- “Politics at the Federal level play a huge part. Federal regulations dictate if the coal industry continues to help with the local economy.”
- “Federal politics plays a huge role, and I wish they didn’t.”
- “Federally, I think that the president is making the future of coal mining seem feasible, when it is not.”
- “Funding on a state and federal level due to them wanting to change to better energy source.”
- “Federal government plays a major role in the industry.”
- “Federal regulation has almost choked out the coal industry...”
- “Too much of a role - the state and federal levels need to be more involved with the local people...”
- “The thought here is that everyone on the upper levels want to go to more green/renewable energy...”
- “Federal overreach... negligible impact on safety.”
- “This would be a HUGE boon for our small community... but it hasn’t/won’t happen due to politics.”

## **3. Local Politics, Tradition, and Community Identity (N=10)**

- “Coal mining affects the way local politics works because the politicians try to look out for the wellbeing of coal mining and coal mining families.”
- “I believe many of the community leaders are living in the past, part of a ‘good old boy’ network that keeps this area oppressed.”
- “I think local politics tries to keep coal around because of the pride, and lifestyle associated with the tradition...”
- “Local boosters have had a hard time accepting the decline of the coal industry and continue to prop it up and glorify it.”
- “At the local county fair, they had a coal shoveling contest...”

- “Many local politicians like the power of being an ‘official’... few have the energy or interest to grow the region.”
- “It plays the role in decision making for the local community.”
- “Local and State are fine, it’s at the Federal level that is concerning.”
- “Too much need to make decisions on more localized governing bodies.”
- “They want to keep it going for jobs.”

#### **4. Political Polarization and Partisan Divides (N=9)**

- “It depends if it is Democrat or Republican in office. Republicans usually support the coal industry and Democrats want to get rid of it completely.”
- “I think coal gets a bad reputation due to the negative political policies of the Democratic Party.”
- “Republicans push the coal industry due to lobbyists...”
- “Of course all levels play a part. As long as Republicans are in control...”
- “Politics, like politicians, are fickle and don’t care as much as they pretend to.”
- “Politics at the Federal level play a huge part... depending on the current political party in power...”
- “Federal overregulation has almost choked out the coal industry...”
- “Too much. Unfortunately, politicians bowing to environmentalist needs to stop.”
- “Drill baby drill — Trump.”

#### **5. Economic and Policy Dependence on Politics (N=7)**

- “A huge role. They’ve wanted to make a direct route (via train) to ports in Texas...”
- “It’s mostly affected (negatively) by the federal government. The local community and state are supportive of coal mining.”
- “Politics can alter the way coal is mined and so it will change the area.”
- “Politics plays a large role in the coal industry, but not the appropriate one... local policy and vision could change the economic outlook.”
- “Federal regulations dictate if the coal industry continues to help with the local economy.”
- “They determine what can and can’t happen in the industry.”
- “I believe they are thinking, ‘Sacrifice the few for the plenty,’ but our community isn’t numbers on a spreadsheet.”

#### **6. Uncertainty, Lack of Knowledge, or Ambivalence (N=7)**

- “I don’t fully understand the impact but permits and demand play a role.”
- “I don’t know.”
- “I don’t know enough about local, state, and federal law/politics to give an educated opinion.”
- “I don’t know if I feel fully qualified to answer this question.”
- “I have no idea.”
- “I know it plays a major role I just don’t know how.”
- “Not sure, but government often overreaches and is disconnected from what people really need.”

#### **7. Corruption, Money, and Influence (N=6)**

- “I think it plays a huge part. I believe that officials with decision-making powers are being ‘bought.’”
- “A lot, all about the money.”
- “They push the narrative that supports the group that gives them the most money.”
- “Politics will always play a role... one day fossil fuel is the devil; another day, it’s perfectly fine.”

- “More than it should.”
- “Way too much. Politicians bowing to environmentalist needs to stop.”

**Question 26.** What would you say is your general opinion on renewable energy or alternative energy resources? (N=87)

I don't like the idea	21.8%
I'm optimistic about the idea	65.5%
I don't care either way	12.6%

**Question 27.** Do you believe that alternative energy industries will lead to Carbon/Emery County local economies to improve, decline, or stay the same? (N=87)

I believe they will improve.	36.8%
I believe they will decline.	41.4%
I believe they will stay the same.	21.8%

**Question 28.** To what degree would you support or oppose the following industries coming to, or increasing their presence if they already exist, in your county of residence?

	Strongly oppose	Oppose	Neither	Support	Strongly support
Solar farms (N=84)	26.2%	11.9%	21.4%	28.6%	11.9%
Wind farms (N=84)	25.0%	15.5%	19.1%	27.4%	13.1%
Nuclear plants (N=84)	9.5%	11.0%	23.8%	20.1%	23.8%
In-land port (N=81)	8.6%	6.2%	45.7%	23.5%	16.1%
Manufacturing (N=83)	1.2%	2.4%	15.7%	39.8%	41.0%
Transportation hub (N=83)	3.6%	6.0%	28.9%	36.1%	25.3%
Tourism (N=83)	9.6%	14.5%	14.5%	37.4%	24.1%
Recreation (N=84)	6.0%	3.6%	8.3%	39.3%	42.9%
More coal mines (N=84)	10.7%	11.0%	26.2%	20.2%	31.0%
Other types of mines (Uranium, Lithium) (N=81)	4.9%	16.1%	28.4%	30.9%	19.8%
Hydrogen energy (N=84)	1.2%	2.4%	39.3%	36.9%	20.2%
Carbon capture and storage (N=84)	6.0%	3.6%	44.1%	32.1%	14.3%

**Question 29.** When thinking about future energy industries in your community, how important are each of the following to you?

	Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
Creates employment opportunities with great benefits. (N=81)	0%	0%	9.9%	38.3%	51.9%

Creates employment opportunities with livable and competitive wages. (N=82)	0%	0%	8.5%	34.2%	57.3%
Creates a large number of employment opportunities for local residents. (N=82)	0%	1.2%	8.5%	37.8%	52.4%
Creates opportunities for employees to advance on the professional ladder. (N=82)	0%	1.2%	20.7%	40.2%	37.8%
Increases the types of employment options local residents have to choose from. (N=82)	0%	1.2%	14.6%	37.8%	46.3%
The industry aligns itself with local community values. (N=82)	1.2%	6.1%	12.2%	40.2%	40.2%
The industry is committed to safety in the workplace. (N=82)	0%	0%	4.9%	28.1%	67.1%
The industry provides accessible opportunities for residents to train to join their workforce. (N=82)	0%	0%	6.1%	47.6%	46.3%
Tax investments from the industry fund community improvement projects. (N=82)	0%	1.2%	7.3%	48.8%	42.7%
Tax investments from the industry lead to lower taxes for residents. (N=82)	1.2%	2.4%	13.4%	36.6%	46.3%
Other, please specify (N=12): Environmental sustainability; Industry is aware of and works for improved environmental impact; Less commodity driven and more economically sustainable and diversified; Something with zero emissions.; Sustainable alternatives not junk policies; Tax investments are used to create a county trust fund to generate income in the future to alleviate taxes and provide after the energy industry is exhausted.; That the industry prioritizes employing the local community vs shipping people in from their other	0%	8.3%	16.7%	16.7%	58.3%

offices/locations; The solar industry seems to bring no long term jobs to our area and is affecting the overall look of our area; no other					
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**Question 30.** When new energy projects are proposed locally, how important is it to you that project developers:

	<b>Not at all important</b>	<b>Slightly important</b>	<b>Moderately important</b>	<b>Very important</b>	<b>Extremely important</b>
Respect local landmarks and places residents want to be protected. (N=82)	1.2%	1.2%	7.3%	29.3%	61.0%
Minimize damage on the local ecosystem. (N=82)	1.2%	1.2%	9.8%	24.4%	63.4%
Put measures in place to protect public health. (N=82)	0%	0%	7.3%	29.3%	63.4%
Openly available to communicate with the public. (N=82)	0%	3.7%	6.1%	31.7%	58.5%
Act transparently and are accountable when mistakes are made. (N=82)	0%	0%	7.3%	23.2%	69.5%
Seek to include community feedback and address community concerns through project development. (N=82)	1.2%	1.2%	11.0%	26.8%	59.8%
Employ local workers. (N=82)	0%	0%	4.9%	26.8%	68.3%
Ensure that produced energy is available for use by local residents. (N=82)	1.2%	2.4%	19.5%	26.8%	50.0%
Invest in the local community. (N=82)	0%	1.2%	7.3%	34.2%	57.3%
Other, please specify (N=6): Aware of impacts on other industries in the community; Livable wages; No other; Responsible environmental impact	0%	0%	16.7%	16.7%	66.7%

## Section 5. Demographics

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**Question 31.** What year were you born? (N=49)

Average age: 39; Age range: 18-76

**Question 32.** What would you say is your general opinion on renewable energy or alternative energy resources? (N=82)

Man	37.8%
Woman	61.0%
Non-binary/other	1.2%

**Question 33.** What is the highest level of education that you've completed and received credits for? (N=82)

Some high school or less	0%
High school graduate (includes GED)	13.4%
Some college with no degree	13.4%
Associate's degree or technical/vocational degree	28.1%
Bachelor's degree	19.5%
Graduate or professional degree	25.6%

**Question 34.** Are you of Hispanic or Latinx origin? (N=81)

Yes	8.6%
No	87.7%
Prefer not to answer	3.7%

**Question 35.** What is your race? Please select all that apply. (N=88)

White	86.4%
Black or African American	1.1%
American Indian or Alaska Native	2.3%
Asian	0%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	2.3%
Other, please specify: Welsh American	1.1%

**Question 36.** What is your political party? (N=81)

Strong Democrat	4.9%
Not very strong Democrat	2.5%
Independent leaning Democrat	18.5%
Independent	12.4%
Independent leaning Republican	11.1%
Not very strong Republican	11.1%
Strong Republican	23.5%
Libertarian	1.2%
Other party	3.7%
Don't know/unsure	11.1%

**Question 37.** What is your current marital status? (N=81)

Single – Never Married	23.5%
Married	67.9%
Domestic Partnership (cohabitating)	1.2%
Widowed	1.2%
Divorced	6.2%
Separated	0%

**Question 38.** In 2024, what was your total household income before taxes? (N=81)

Less than \$25,000	6.2%
\$25,000-\$34,999	3.7%
\$35,000-\$49,999	12.4%
\$50,000-\$74,999	13.6%
\$75,000-\$99,999	18.5%
\$100,000-\$149,999	21.0%
\$150,000-\$199,999	12.4%
Over \$200,000	1.2%
Prefer not to answer	11.1%