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Figures Show Coal Employment Up in W.Va.

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CHARLESTON (AP) - State figures show that coal mining employment in West Virginia is at its highest level since the 1990s.

The Charleston Gazette says a recent analysis of Workforce West Virginia figures by Ted Boettner with the West Virginia Center for Budget and Policy shows there were nearly 22,700 mining jobs in 2011. That's the highest level since 1995.

According to separate figures from the state Office of Miners' Health, Safety and Training, there were 22,300 mining jobs in 2011. That's the highest level since 1993.

But the U.S. Department of Energy projects that coal production in Central Appalachia will decline in the future. The agency says coal production in West Virginia so far this year is about 7 percent lower than during the same period in 2011.

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