

# Common cause

## It's coal leading the effort for clean solutions

- [Ann Turner](#)

Even here in Gillette, Wyoming, the Energy Capital of the Nation and beat No. 1 of the heart of coal country, we can find merit in the Clean Power Plan.

Heck, in an alternative universe, we could even support it.

Now that we have your attention, stop sharpening the pitchforks and priming the torches for a minute.

Gillette again was in the spotlight of what seems a perpetual conflict over fossil fuels, coal mining and who's selling whose soul to the devil.

Environmentalists say keep it in the ground and blame coal for just about everything that ails the Earth short of male-pattern baldness. Then there's everyone else, including us here in Campbell County. We're the evil, morally bankrupt and greedy coal-mining profiteers who want to destroy the planet, twirling our mustaches and cackling maliciously while it happens.

This is the mental picture, at least, one could form about supporters and opponents of the Clean Power Plan from sitting in on last week's marathon EPA listening session on repealing the Obama-era regulation.

What's been lost in this translation, especially as the debate has been portrayed nationally, is that the coal industry and people like the hard-working miners and support services found here want the same thing as their environmentalist counterparts.

A clean, healthy planet.

That's why it's imperative the Trump administration continue with its effort to repeal the Clean Power Plan. Not because it wants to significantly reduce harmful carbon dioxide emissions from coal-fired power plants, but because it uses that noble cause as a smokescreen for the plan's true purpose — making the thermal coal industry extinct altogether.

How else can anyone explain why Wyoming, which produces 40 percent of the thermal coal burned in U.S. coal-fired power plants, has emerged as a world leader in research and development of CO2 capture and reuse technologies?

The NRG COSI Carbon XPrize will announce in just a couple of weeks the five final research teams that will occupy space in the Integrated Test Center at the Dry Fork Station power plant. It's the third and final leg of the organization's \$20 million incentive to develop practical ways to capture and repurpose CO2 emissions.

Campbell County and the folks at Energy Capital Economic Development also are partnering with the University of Wyoming to develop another carbon research facility here to develop ways to use our abundant coal resources other than burning it.

Then there's the activity by Clean Coal Technologies Inc., which recently relocated its coal processing test facility near Gillette. If successful, its treated coal will produce much lower emissions than what our already low-sulfur coal does.

The truth is, the Clean Power Plan debate shows we have more in common than many would like to admit. But you can't get around how different our end goals are.

It's more than ironic that it's the pro-coal element leading the way for practical solutions and breakthroughs that don't threaten to cripple our nation's ability to provide affordable power to its population.