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Beyond Coal: Imagining Appalachia's Future

To offset lost mining jobs, officials, business leaders and environmentalists are setting aside political feuds to try to create an entrepreneurial economy.

By SHERYL GAY STOLBERGAUG. 17, 2016

PIKEVILLE, Ky. — Here in the heart of central Appalachian coal country, an economic experiment is underway inside an airy renovated Coca-Cola bottling plant. Most days, Michael Harrison, a former mine electrician and “buggy man” who once drove trucks 700 feet underground, can be found hunched over a silver laptop, designing websites for clients like the Pikeville tourism board.

Mr. Harrison, 36, is one of 10 former mine workers employed at BitSource, an internet start-up founded by two Pikeville businessmen determined to prove a point: that with training and encouragement, Kentucky miners can learn to code. [READ MORE](#)

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