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Economic, Abundant/Secure,
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A M E R I C A N coal

Local to Global: The Economics of Coal

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The white-tailed four-point deer didn't even look in their direction before it bolted, and all Tim and his 10-year-old son, Henry, could do is watch as it pranced away through the trees, its perky, wiggling tail mocking them as it disappeared. Tim wasn't mad at all. An hour of tracking lost was an hour of father/son time gained. These are framed moments in the life of an American coal family and illustrate the strong resolve that is ingrained within the coal culture.

Tim Patrick O'Harran, national sales manager for conveyor products at Martin Engineering, understands this. The knowledge his father passed on to him is being handed down to Henry and Rosie, his seven-year-old daughter.

Growing up in the suburbs of Detroit, Michigan, Tim was raised by his mother, Patty, a jewelry store manager, and his father, Tim Sr., a skilled tradesman and professional in the steel industry.

"I could always tell when my dad had worked in the coke battery that day, because it gives off a unique smell," O'Harran reflected. "We'd sit at the dinner table, and my dad would say, 'This meal is brought to you by coal.' That always stuck with me."

In school, Tim did well in his studies and was athletic, but had no aspirations

to be a sports star. His goal was to be like his father. So, at 15, while still attending high school, rather than practice on the football field with his friends, he entered a journeyman carpenter and millwright program after school and learned a trade. Working for a local builder on weekends and summers, he developed valuable skills, as well as the work ethic and character that he would carry with him throughout his life.

After graduating high school, Tim did exactly what he'd dreamed and followed in his father's footsteps by spending a year as a maintenance apprentice in a steel mill in Gary, Indiana. At 18 years old, this was his first experience working around coal, an industry that would remain woven into his career.

BRIGHT RED HAT AND A SHINY GREEN HORN

In 1998, at age 20, Tim decided to follow his family down to Jacksonville,

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Florida. "That's when I got my first job working directly with coal for a mechanical contractor at a coal-fired power plant, maintaining the conveyors, turbines and boilers," he said. "It was a great fit for me."

His first impression of the coal industry was one of amazement that a single chunk of rock that was organic matter solidified under pressure over millions of years could help build and power one of the greatest nations on Earth.

He was recruited by a national conveyor equipment and maintenance company and traveled the country servicing underground coal mines. No sooner had he graduated out of being a greenhorn at the power plant, he put on his red hat to enter the mines.

"Veteran miners told me that you never truly understand coal until you enter that mine, and they were right," O'Harran pointed out. "They called us 'Red Hats,' because that's what we had to wear for our entire

first year in the mines. It's a humbling experience."

"Red Hats" are required to complete 40 hours of safety training before performing any mining duties, and then spend a year working in and around the mine. The safety training topics include mine gases, roof control, evacuation procedures and the rights provided by the 1978 *Mine Act*. Having completed the training and put in their time, new miners earn a black hard hat, a proud day that every rookie anticipates.

"I handled the eastern and central region of the country, so I've been in several of the major mines throughout the country, working closely with conveyors and their operators," he explained. "These are dedicated people who love what they do."

ALL IN THE FAMILY

Constantly traveling was enjoyable, but with family being so important to him, Tim was itching to have one of his own. Back home in Jacksonville, a power plant offered him a job as a

maintenance planner to fill its need for an experienced conveyor technician to keep material flowing. There, he rose to managing the maintenance team and started a family.

As the years passed, Tim's experience, knowledge and contacts in the industry grew. During the same period, his father had taken a job with Martin Engineering. Based in Neponset, Illinois, the company is one of the leading manufacturers of conveyor accessories and bulk material handling equipment in the world.

In 2009, Tim was hired as a construction manager at Martin Engineering, charged with overseeing equipment installation projects across North America. The entire family was back together again in Detroit, where it had all started. Having proven himself as a talented manager, Tim was later put in charge of sales in the booming Canadian mining and energy industries. Next, the call came to oversee sales for all of the U.S. and Canada, in the role he remains in today where Tim is responsible for a sizeable

staff producing millions of dollars in revenue each year.

"It's nice to be able to work in the same company as my father, who's a business development manager here," he said. "I wouldn't be where I am today without him."

A POSITIVE FUTURE

According to Tim, the improved federal policies and attitudes toward coal create a prime opportunity for the next generation of aspiring engineers, geologists, logistical staff and even IT positions across every level of the industry.

"My career proves that the coal industry isn't just a bunch of dust-covered miners working deep in the earth. It's a vibrant and innovative industry where young people can find stability, just like me. Heck, I'm only 39 years old," he laughed. "I, and most of my colleagues, are excited for the future of our coal families."

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Procurement



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