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(Wyo.)-Wyoming Coal Production Fell 3.3% In 2013



By: Roxie Graham-Marski Posted at: 02/17/2014 11:47 AM

CASPER, Wyo. (ASSOCIATED PRESS) - Federal data show Wyoming coal production fell by 3.3 percent in 2013, marking the fourth consecutive year of declining output in the nation's top coal producing state. Employment also continued to fall, with the sector shedding more than 300 jobs last year.

Coal company executives said during a conference call Thursday the decrease in production reflected a wet year, hindering operations at surface mines, and constraints in rail service.

But industry leaders were optimistic about 2014, saying a cold winter and relatively high natural gas prices meant utilities burned more coal in 2013, drawing down stockpiles at a greater rate than at any point in more than a decade.

The Mine Safety and Health Administration says coal production fell from 401 million tons statewide in 2012 to 388 million last year.