



Jay Rockefeller and the Northern Panhandle A History of Economic Development

March 1982

National Steel announces the subsidiary Weirton Steel will close unless a buyer came forward. When no corporate buyer materializes, Weirton steelworkers undertake a campaign to purchase the plant under the Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP). Various constituent groups, political leaders, Governor Rockefeller, management, and labor joined in the movement.

1987

The Steel Industry in the Upper Ohio Valley is thriving. Weirton Steel alone employed nearly 20,000 workers.

June 1998

Senator Rockefeller sends a letter to **President Bill Clinton** explaining the Hando Steel situation and its potential impact on Weirton Steel and the Ohio Valley, urging President Clinton to address the issue directly with South Korean President Kim Dae-jung during President Dae-jung's week-long visit to Washington.

June 1998

Senator Rockefeller joins colleagues, union leaders and Weirton Steel officials to celebrate Weirton Steel's "Ohio Valley vs. South Korea Rally in the Valley" campaign which generated over 12,000 signatures from Ohio Valley residents seeking to stop unfair trade practices by the Korean Government and Hando Steel. Weirton Steel launched the campaign to educate the public and to encourage trade officials to take action against South Korea for illegally subsidizing Hando Steel and directly paying the company's creditors.

October 1998

Senator Rockefeller introduces the "Trade Fairness Act of 1998" to give the President a new tool to deal with the current crisis in the domestic steel industry. The legislation, co-sponsored by

Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA), would reform Section 201 of the Trade Act of 1974, putting U.S. industries on a level playing field when it came to taking action against import surges from foreign competitors.

November 1998

Senator Rockefeller visits Weirton Steel to discuss the foreign steel import crisis with company and union officials. The Senator toured the plant, and held productive meetings with Independent Steel Workers Union President **Mark Glyptis** and other union officials and company President **Dick Reiderer**.

January 1999

At a Senate Finance Committee Hearing, Senator Rockefeller renews his call for action to end steel dumping. The hearing featured a panel of witnesses discussing steel trade.

April 2000

Senator Rockefeller meets with **Richard Riederer**, then CEO of Weirton Steel, to discuss a possible Weirton/Wheeling-Pitt merger.

June 2000

Senator Rockefeller testifies before the International Trade Commission urging the ITC to fulfill its responsibility for effective enforcement of trade laws.

May 2001

Senator Rockefeller introduces the “Save the American Steel Industry Act of 2001”. This bill would provide economic relief for companies facing consolidation and mergers – a move designed to help domestic producers of steel who have been hit the hardest by illegal foreign steel dumping.

May 2001

Senator Rockefeller sends a letter to **President George W. Bush** calling on the President to take immediate and decisive action needed to save crippled steel manufacturers. Senator Rockefeller outlines a specific plan of action beginning with a Section 201 investigation by the ITC that would trigger protections for the embattled steel industry.

September 2001

Following the tragic events of 9/11, Senator Rockefeller testifies before the ITC asking the commission to uphold the laws that Congress has passed and to make an affirmative determination that the domestic industry has been seriously injured due to steel imports during the timeframe of the 201 investigation. As a result of 9/11, Senator Rockefeller concludes that

this is now a national security issue. Without domestic steel, we cannot rebuild from the national tragedy.

October 2001

The ITC votes affirmatively that the American steel industry had sustained serious injury as a result of foreign low-priced imports. Senator Rockefeller called this a victory for the domestic steel industry and called on President Bush to impose needed relief in the form of tariffs, quotas, or quantitative restraints on all steel imports found to be injurious by the commission.

November 2001

At a joint steel caucus meeting with Administration Officials, Senator Rockefeller outlines his concerns regarding the urgent steel crisis facing the U.S. Steel industry. Senator Rockefeller tells **U.S. Commerce Secretary Don Evans** that the Administration must address retiree health care costs that hurt American steel makers ability to compete, as well as an expedited decision on a 201 remedy.

July 2002

Senator Rockefeller testifies before the ITC on behalf of the nation's steel industry, strongly urging the commission to rule that illegal imports of cold-rolled steel had caused injury to the U.S. steel industry.

May 2003

Weirton Steel files a voluntary petition for protection under Chapter 11 of the bankruptcy code.

July 2003

Senator Rockefeller testifies before the ITC emphasizing the need to continue to protect this country's steel industry from a flood of imports. Senator Rockefeller told the ITC that the Section 201 safeguards should stay in effect for the full 3 year period.

October 2003

Senator Rockefeller expresses concern about the reports of a Weirton Steel plan that would eliminate retiree benefits as a way for the company to come out of bankruptcy.

2004

Weirton Steel is purchased for \$253 million by International Steel Group (ISG).

April 2004

Senator Rockefeller writes to **Timothy Sullivan, then Director of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program (TAA)** for the United States Department of Labor, offering strong support for the application submitted by the Independent Steelworkers Union representing former employees at Weirton Steel Corporation.

2005

ISG sells its holdings, including Weirton, to Mittal Steel.

June 2005

Senator Rockefeller writes to **Lou Schorch, CEO of Mittal Steel U.S.A.** regarding the news that Mittal idled the No. 2 blast furnace at its Weirton plant, completely shutting down the hot end. That action laid-off well over 700 workers. In his letter to Mr. Schorch, Senator Rockefeller questioned Mittal's intentions for the facility and expressed concerns the facility would never re-open.

November 2005

Mittal officially closes the hot end in Weirton.

December 2005

Senator Rockefeller meets with Mittal Steel U.S.A. CEO **Lou Schorch** in Washington to discuss the closing of Mittal's hot end plant in Weirton. Senator Rockefeller was extremely frustrated by the lack of consultation by executives at Mittal and made his views explicitly known. Senator Rockefeller told Mr. Schorch that he had not been so angry at anybody since his days as Governor and that Weirton deserved better.

December 2005

Senator Rockefeller offers his full support of the application to the United States Department of Labor for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) which was submitted by **Mark Glyptis** and the Independent Steelworkers Union on behalf of steelworkers at ArcelorMittal in a letter to **Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao**.

2006

Mittal Steel becomes ArcelorMittal.

February 2006

Senator Rockefeller learns from the Department of Labor that Weirton's steelworkers will receive TAA benefits.

April 2006

Senator Rockefeller submits written testimony to the U.S. International Trade Commission demanding that the ITC continue the order against tin dumping. In 2000, Senator Rockefeller was credited with being instrumental in having the ITC put the order in place.

July 2006

Senator Rockefeller, Senator Byrd, and Congressman Mollohan send a joint letter to **Lou Schorch** contemplating the prospect of a Department of Justice (DOJ) directed divestiture of some component of Mittal Steel's tinplate manufacturing capacity in the United States. The DOJ ultimately forced Mittal to sell its facility at Sparrows Point – outside of Baltimore – instead of the Weirton facility.

October 2006

Senator Rockefeller testifies on behalf of the domestic steel industry at the Corrosion-Resistant Steel Sunset Review.

Early 2007

Mittal entered into agreements with Esmark to sell the company's tin assets in Weirton.

February 2007

The DOJ forces Mittal to sell its facility at Sparrows Point – outside of Baltimore – instead of the Weirton facility. This causes the deal with Esmark to fall through.

March 2007

Senator Rockefeller meets with **Lou Schorch, now CEO of ArcelorMittal Flat Americas**, to discuss the future of ArcelorMittal's operations in Weirton. Senator Rockefeller at the time urged Mittal to either recommit to Weirton and its workers by reinvesting in the facility and running it at full speed or to sell the facilities – both the tin and steelmaking components – to someone who is willing to run the company.

April 2007

The ISU completes a merger with the USW.

August 2007

ArcelorMittal announces it will demolish the old open hearth. This is seen as a positive step in the right direction to free up some of the land in Weirton controlled by Mittal.

August 2007

ArcelorMittal closes the hot mill in Weirton resulting in the lay-offs of nearly 250 steelworkers. This closure made Weirton a “tin-only” facility. Total employment at ArcelorMittal in Weirton is down to approximately 1,200

August 2007

As a result of the recent Mittal news, Senator Rockefeller convenes a meeting in Weirton with local business leaders, economic development officials, and local elected officials. Those in attendance discussed the future of Weirton with Senator Rockefeller and specific projects they could be helpful with – particularly since the steel industry future in the area was so uncertain. The meeting took place on August 27th at Dee-Jays.

September 2007

After meeting with locals in Weirton, Senator Rockefeller meets with **Lou Schorsch** in Washington to discuss ArcelorMittal’s Weirton operations. During the meeting, Senator Rockefeller asked ArcelorMittal to reconsider the closing of the strip mill. Senator Rockefeller also asked the company to sell-off usable assets when there are willing buyers (at that point in time, Esmark remained interested in the blast furnaces to make pig iron). Finally, Senator Rockefeller used this meeting as another opportunity to ask ArcelorMittal to part with usable land.

January 2008

Senator Rockefeller meets with ArcelorMittal officials in Washington to discuss the company’s plans to sell unused land at their Weirton facility to spur economic development in the region.

April 2008

As a follow-up to the September 2007 meeting, Senator Rockefeller and the Discover the REAL West Virginia Foundation host a larger Economic Development Roundtable in Weirton. This economic roundtable brought together key players including local elected officials, business leaders, and economic development officials to the table to discuss and identify strategies to grow the Weirton economy including a discussion on the significant developable land in the area – particularly the nearly 1,800 acres owned by ArcelorMittal that the company is not using for the tin mill operation. During the meeting in September 2007, as well as follow-up discussion that Senator Rockefeller had with the community and business leaders, it became clear that the area has no clear economic development strategy or any particular group willing to take the lead to do what is needed to grow its economy. Senator Rockefeller encouraged the group to come up with a comprehensive development strategy for the area.

2009

As a result of the 2008 meeting, the Business Development Corporation of the Northern Panhandle hires **Pat Ford** as Executive Director.

January 2010

Senator Rockefeller sends a letter to **Michael Rippey**, ArcelorMittal U.S.A. President and CEO, expressing his concern that ArcelorMittal planned to lay off 171 employees in Weirton.

August 2011

Senator Rockefeller sends staff to Weirton to meet with **Pat Ford**, Executive Director of the Business Development Corporation of the Northern Panhandle and his Board to discuss the ArcelorMittal land situation. Senator Rockefeller's staff is taken on a driving tour of the city to see the property first hand.

September 2011

The Business Development Corporation finalizes the Regional Investment Plan for Brooke – Hancock counties. Senator Rockefeller specifically requested the community come up with this plan during his community roundtable in April of 2008.

February 2012

Senator Rockefeller writes to **Lakshmi Mittal**, Chairman and CEO of ArcelorMittal and **Mike Rippey**, President and CEO of ArcelorMittal U.S.A. encouraging them to maximize the economic potential of Mittal's Weirton property. ArcelorMittal currently employs 950 people.

March 2012

Senator Rockefeller sends 3 staff members back to Weirton to meet with **Pat Ford**, **Mayor George Kondik**, and USW Representative **Mark Gylptis** to get an update on the current status of Mittal's Weirton property. A larger roundtable meeting between Senator Rockefeller and community leaders is planned for April 2012.

March 2012

The Weirton Planning Commission approves Arcelor-Mittal's plan to subdivide the majority of its property in the city, setting the stage for a lot of potentially valuable property. There are several areas the company is willing to part ways, but the major areas that could be redeveloped are Brown's Island, the area surrounding the Williams Country Club and the company's northernmost plant.

March 2012

Senator Rockefeller sends a letter to the International Trade Commission (ITC) to urge them to uphold existing antidumping orders against Japanese tin producers. On April 11, the ITC will reconsider the order and determine whether to revoke it or keep it in place for another 5 years.

April 2012

Senator Rockefeller holds roundtable in Weirton to discuss the available Mittal properties and urge community officials and business leaders to work together to bring jobs to the community.