

## ARC Conference...



*Athens Rising Tide e-mailed this photo of their protest banner (on the old Richland Avenue bridge), which was hung on Tuesday but taken down shortly after.*

## Activists challenge 'clean coal' at confab in Athens

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Environmental activists staged a small protest and hung a banner from the Richland Avenue bridge early Tuesday morning to tell the state and regional leaders attending the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) conference at Ohio University that

clean energy does not come from coal.

The theme of the conference at the OU Baker Center was "new energy, new jobs" and featured panel discussions on topics such as wind power, green enterprise, and developing a cleaner coal power industry.

Local members of Rising Tide, an environmental group that favors confrontational "direct action" in its fight against climate change and the coal industry, said they hung the banner.

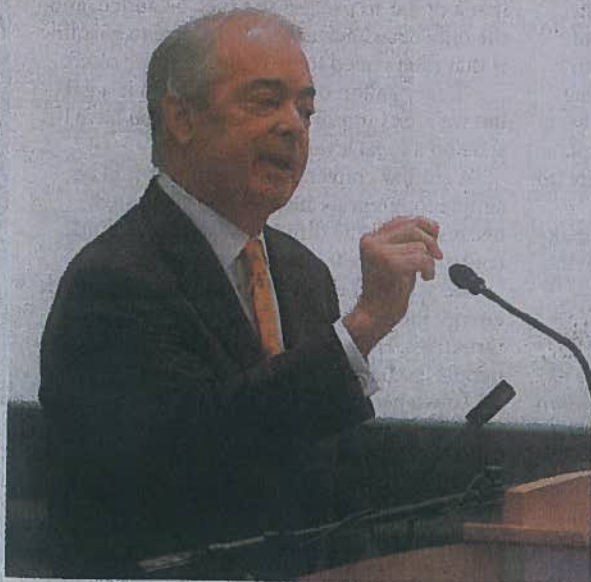
The banner was gone by the time Duke Energy President James Rogers delivered the keynote address at the ARC conference at 9:15 a.m. Officers at the Athens and OU police departments said police were not involved.

Duke Energy is one of the largest producers of electricity in the country and operates coal-fired power plants in Indiana, Ohio and the Carolinas.

A few protesters stood outside the conference with banners supporting "green energy" and decrying new coal power projects, including the 1,000-megawatt power plant that American Municipal Power (AMP) is developing in southern Meigs County.

"I want to believe that the ARC is going to be a catalyst for making Appalachia a green-collar economic role model, but that is

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*James E. Rogers, president and CEO of Duke Energy, delivers the keynote speech Tuesday morning in Baker Center Ballroom. Photo by Ed Warwick*

# Clean coal protest

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definitely not going to happen if coal stays in the picture," an anonymous spokeswoman for Rising Tide said in a release.

Rogers does not agree. During his speech, he said the energy industry must build "a new generation" of coal-burning power plants that emit less carbon dioxide and other pollutants without putting an "undue burden" on those who depend on coal for jobs and affordable energy. "When we make the transition to low carbon, it has to be affordable and fair," Rogers said.

Rising Tide, however, claims that funding "clean-coal" technologies will not address the fundamental problems of the coal industry.

Mountaintop-removal coal mining and coal processing that creates big sludge ponds are destructive practices that will continue to negatively impact Appalachia despite technological advances, according to the Rising Tide release

State leaders seem to favor Rogers' position over that of the anti-coal environmentalists.

Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland, who attended the conference, supports the AMP coal-burning power plant planned near Letart Falls because he said the plant will use advanced technology to reduce pollution.

Strickland announced in June that AMP will receive a \$30 million bridge loan for the project from the advanced-energy portion of the state's job stimulus plan.

The plant will bring thousands of temporary construction jobs and millions of dollars to southeast Ohio, as well as permanent power-plant jobs and spin-off jobs in the coal industry and support businesses. However, environmental groups including the Sierra Club are campaigning against it.

The state has issued AMP all the necessary permits for the plant, and construction could begin this winter despite hearings on appeals filed by the Sierra Club and its allies.