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Bald eagle cam goes live at U.S. Steel mill in West Mifflin



MARY ANN THOMAS | Tuesday, December 21, 2021 4:15 p.m.



COURTESY OF PIXCAMS/U.S. STEEL IRVIN WORKS

One of the nesting bald eagles near its nest at the U.S. Steel Irvin Works plant in West Mifflin in December of 2021. In the background is the Monongahela River and the Dravosburg bridge.

U.S. Steel Irvin Works in West Mifflin flipped the switch today on its first live webcam trained on bald eagles nesting on their property along the Monongahela River.

The nest is believed to be the only one located at a working steel mill in the state. The birds built the nest in a sycamore tree in a wooded area along the river about 100 yards below the mill buildings.



"Our employees have enjoyed watching the birds, and we wanted to find a way to share their activity with the broader community," said Don German, Irvin plant manager.

"We are honored to have the bald eagle, a symbol of American pride, living and thriving comfortably at our facility, where U. S. Steel products, mined, melted and made in America, are finished."

The mill's live webcam is one of two live webcams documenting bald eagle pairs nesting about six miles apart on the Monongahela River. The other nest in Pittsburgh's Hays neighborhood is occupied by an eagle couple entering their 10th year of breeding.

"We will double the public's viewing opportunities with video quality we haven't seen in previous years," said Bill Powers, president of PixCams. The Murrysville company currently has 27 live webcams in southwestern Pennsylvania, including the Hays' site, and in other parts of the country.

Last year, PixCams' Pittsburgh Hays eagle nest received more than 3.1 million unique views when the couple successfully raised three eaglets.

"U.S. Steel put a lot of work and time into this project we're extremely appreciative of what they've done," said Powers.

"This will be another great opportunity for people from Pittsburgh and all over the world to view another pair of bald eagles in the city," he said. "Pittsburgh has come a long way, and it speaks volumes that we have a pair of bald eagles nesting at Irvin Plant."

PixCams installed two new webcams at both eagle nests this year offering higher resolution than previous years, Powers said. However, since the steel mill webcam is powered by electricity and hooked directly to the Internet, the resolution will be greater some of the time.

Both webcams have tilt and zoom capabilities for up-close nest shots as well as distant views of the eagles fishing in the Monongahela River.

"This will be a great learning experience to have two nests so close," Powers said. Currently, the U.S. Steel bald eagles are busy with nestorations for their third year of breeding on the mill grounds. This month, the birds have been seen perching in and around their nest during webcam screen tests.

Bald eagles nest around the same time each year. Powers expects the Hays pair to nest around mid-February and the U.S. Steel eagles to lay their first egg of the season later in February or early March as they have in previous years.

U.S. Steel is protecting the nest. They have erected signs, trail cameras and additional security on their property to keep intruders from disturbing the birds.

The Pennsylvania Game Commission granted U. S. Steel permission to install the live camera. In addition to the two nests on the Monongahela River, the game commission is associated with two other eagle webcams near Codorus State Park in Hanover east of Gettysburg and another at a Pennsylvania farm.

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