Dear ACEC/NC Members,

2017 was an exciting and productive year of Advocacy for ACEC/NC. In May the Board of Directors voted to form our own Independent Expenditure Account (ECNC) and our own State PAC (ACEC NC PAC) to enhance our State-level program and to support infrastructure programs and ballot initiatives that build and protect the engineering profession. You’ll be hearing more about both entities and how they will help strengthen our legislative programs that benefit you in North Carolina as we move forward in 2018.

At the Federal level, in the first comprehensive tax reform measure passed by Congress in more than 30 years, ACEC was successful in ensuring that engineering firms of all business structures will have access to lower rates or tax deductions. The legislation lowers the corporate tax rate from 35 percent to 21 percent and creates a 20 percent tax deduction for passthrough firms, including S corporations, partnerships, and LLCs. In the original House and Senate bills, engineering passthroughs were limited in their access to the tax deduction. After extensive advocacy by ACEC staff and members, including nearly 6,000 member emails, letters and phone calls to Congressional offices, Congressional leaders agreed to include language in the final version to provide engineering firms with full use of the deduction.

Both The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal highlighted engineering firms as winners in the tax bill. Passthroughs in certain other industries, including accountants, doctors, lawyers, and financiers, did not receive full access to the 20 percent tax deduction. In addition to lower tax rates, the legislation preserves ESOPs and other retirement savings mechanisms, as well as private activity bonds and renewable energy incentives.

This is another example of where grassroots engagement played a critical role in our success, and I wanted you to know how much we appreciated the help received from many firms who would have been hurt by the original provisions of the Bill. It also reinforces the importance of your contributions to our National PAC – ACEC/PAC. Without those contributions, the power ACEC has to influence legislation in Washington would be severely limited.

To that end, ACEC/NC member firms came through again and helped us achieve our 2017 ACEC/PAC goal for the 6th straight year!

Again, thank you for your continued support and contributions to our Advocacy programs. Watch for exciting announcements in 2018!

James A. Smith, P.E.
Executive Director, ACEC/NC
From the President of ACEC:

Dear Colleagues –

Happy New Year! As you know, 2017 ended with a major win for our Member firms in the newly enacted tax law – ensuring that C Corps will benefit from significantly lower tax rates, and pass-through firms, which comprise the majority of our membership, are eligible for a new 20% deduction. We protected cash accounting, ESOPs, energy credits and other items of importance. All this was made possible by your thousands of emails, letters and phone calls to Members of Congress in response to our Action Alerts, and timely meetings with Congressional Committee members and staff. The entire effort was immeasurably aided by our record $1 million-plus ACEC/PAC fundraising year. Looking forward in 2018, we’ll work closely with you beginning with our next major agenda item coming up early in the year – infrastructure funding, including highways, airports, water and energy.

Dave

January 1, 2018

General

- Growing confidence in the overall business environment and profitability of our firms pushed the ACEC Engineering Business Index (EBI) up another 1.6 points to 65.9 (anything over 50 is considered evidence of an expanding market environment).

- ACEC/PAC ended the year with a record $1,064,000 raised and a record 42 states having met their 2017 fundraising goals.

- Don’t forget: deadline for submissions for the 2018 EEA is this Friday, January 6; the awards will be presented at the EEA Gala celebration on Tuesday, April 24 in Washington, D.C. as part of the Annual Convention; comedian and screen actor Kevin Nealon will again serve as host.

Government Advocacy

- Secured balanced reforms in year-end tax law that reduces tax rates for engineering firm C corporations from 35% to 21%, provides pass-through firms with access to a new 20% tax deduction, while also protecting cash accounting and existing retirement and employee ownership mechanisms (such as ESOPs).

- Engaged with coalition allies to wage a successful campaign to protect the tax preferred treatment of Private Activity Bonds (PABs) in final tax bill.

- Helped to secure the confirmation of Emily Murphy to lead the General Services Administration (GSA).

- ACEC’s Superfund Working Group met with the EPA Superfund Task Force to discuss a performance-based contracting approach to improve the allocation of risk at clean-up sites.

- ACEC members met with the Veterans Administration to advocate for the use of QBS on task orders and other smaller projects.

- ACEC/Florida received a Minuteman Fund grant to help defray the cost of an amicus brief defending contract terms that protect design professionals from consequential damages liability.

- ACEC/Minnesota received a Minuteman Fund grant to support its efforts to fight an unfair and overbroad state agency procurement policy regarding conflicts of interest.

Business Resources

- With 18 registered sites and more than 40 participants, December’s most popular online class, Embracing an Atmosphere of Accountability, discussed effective strategies to help member firms incorporate accountability into firm culture to increase productivity and efficiency.

- Coalitions’ best sellers for December included CAMEE’s Quality Assurance / Quality Control Guidelines and CASE’s Project Management Training Curriculum.

- January online programs will feature: How the New Tax Reform Law Will Impact the Engineering Industry...Continued on p.4.
Reports & Updates

The next Lunch with the Board will be held in Charlotte, NC -

Calling All Charlotte area ACEC/NC Members!

Location:
The Speedway Club at Charlotte Motor Speedway
The 600 Room
5555 Concord Parkway South
Concord, NC 28027

Date: March 15, 2018
Time: 12:00pm-1:30pm
A Charlotte Motor Speedway “Feel The Thrill” Tour immediately following lunch from 1:30-2:30pm!

The “refueled” Feel the Thrill Tour offers fans a close-up look at areas that are off-limits on race days. You will see the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series Garage, navigate through two infield race tracks, make your way down Pit Road and take a picture in Victory Circle. Learn the history of Charlotte Motor Speedway while enjoying a comfortable van ride around the Superspeedway where you will feel the full-tilt force of the 24-degree banking!

Fees/Admission: There is no charge to attend this event, Please RSVP so that we have an accurate head count.

Consulting Congress Days

Calling all ACEC/NC Members...

This is your time to Make Your Mark on Washington! Join us April 17–18 in Washington, DC for the 2018 Consulting Congress Days (CCD). This is your chance to make an impact on the decisions that directly affect your business. You can reap the rewards of a more business-friendly Congress but we need your help to get results!

*Round Trip Bus Travel
- Includes 4/17 breakfast, snacks, beverages and lunch on the coach & evening reception. On 4/18 includes “grab-n-go” breakfast, snacks and beverages on the coach

*Tuesday Evening Reception Only
- No Bus Travel - Includes 4/17 evening reception only

*One Way Bus Travel & Reception
- Includes 4/17 evening reception, 4/18 one way travel to Raleigh; snacks and beverages on the bus

REGISTRATION OPENING SOON

PLEASE NOTE:
Reservations will be made by Jessica Mills via rooming list provided to the hotel. The CUT-OFF DATE for this discounted rate is 4/4/18. Please register for the event or email Jessica by MONDAY, APRIL 3rd to confirm your room. RoomRate@$249.00
INFRASTRUCTURE SET TO ENERGIZE NATURAL GAS MARKET

By Gerry Donohue

[Reprinted from P-76 ENGINEERING INC. NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2017]

Appalachia has been on the front lines from the beginning of the shale gas revolution. Now the region is poised for a substantial boost with the construction of several pipelines and at least one ethane cracker plant. Looking into the future, government and industry leaders are working together to grow the natural gas-fueled industrial base in this economically challenged area.

The Marcellus and Utica shale formations, which underlay parts of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia and Kentucky, are the largest source of natural gas in the United States and among the largest in the world. Until 2008, the gas was mostly untapped because it was trapped in low-permeability shale. The improvement of horizontal directional drilling and hydraulic fracturing technologies in the early 2000s began an energy boom in the region. From virtually zero output in 2008, the Marcellus/Utica formation now produces more than 20 billion cubic feet per day (Bcf/d), which is about 30 percent of the nation's production.

The U.S. Energy Information Agency forecasts that Marcellus/Utica will produce more than 40 Bcf/d by 2040, over half of total U.S. shale gas production.

Engineering firms working with gas producers in the region have had a bumpy ride over the past three years. A global glut of natural gas pushed down prices from $4.50-$5/million Btu (MMBtu) in early 2014 to $1.75-$2/MMBtu in early 2016. Prices have since rebounded to around $3/MMBtu.

“Two challenges of working in this industry are its cyclical nature and velocity,” says Patrick O’Hara, senior vice president at 40 Woodard & Curran, a national environmental consulting firm serving industry, government and institutions. “Your firm needs a lot of flexibility in capabilities and staffing. This industry moves really fast, addressing lots of dynamic technological and regulatory changes.”

KEEPING UP WITH SUPPLY

While production in the Marcellus/Utica has increased at a rapid pace over the past decade, infrastructure investment has severely lagged. The output dwarfs the regional demand, but there's a shortage of pipelines to transport the natural gas to high-demand areas, such as Mont Belvieu on the Gulf Coast, where a massive network of chemical processing and industrial plants use it as both an energy source and feedstock.

The consequent oversupply has resulted in a lower price for Marcellus/Utica natural gas, making extraction less profitable. Many wells drilled in the region have not been brought online because of the insufficient infrastructure.

That situation is poised to change with several new pipelines moving through permitting and/or already under construction. The $4-billion, 713-mile Rover pipeline is scheduled to come online in early 2018, transporting 3.25 Bcf/d from southeastern Ohio to northwestern Ohio where it will connect to pipelines heading to the Gulf Coast, Michigan and the Gas Dawn Hub in Ontario.

Several other pipelines are slowly making their way through permitting, delayed partly because the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission did not have a quorum to vote on projects during the first half of 2017.

The 600-mile, $5 billion Atlantic Coast Pipeline will transport 1.5 Bcf/d from West Virginia to Virginia and North Carolina to meet heating and electric generation demand. If construction begins on schedule in 2018, the pipeline will enter service in 2019.

The 304-mile, 42-inch-diameter Mountain Valley Pipeline would transport 2 Bcf/d from northwestern West Virginia to southern Virginia where it will connect with the Transcontinental Gas Pipe...
2017 ACEC NC PAC, ACEC/PAC, ECNC

ACEC/PAC (NATIONAL PAC) – ACEC/NC ACHIEVES 2017 ACEC/PAC GOAL!

As you know, each year ACEC/NC is charged by ACEC, our national office in Washington, DC, to solicit contributions from individuals within our membership for our national political action committee, ACEC/PAC. Our state’s goal for 2017 was $33,463. After a whirlwind campaign, and a successful Summer Auction and Holiday casino night in December, we roared past the goal raising $34,390 - a new record! This is the sixth straight year ACEC/North Carolina has hit the target! ACEC/North Carolina members successfully contributed their fair share to allow ACEC/National to continue their influence on Capitol Hill. The work in Washington remains and ACEC/National and North Carolina will continue to defend the rights of the private consulting engineering community with diligence and determination.

Our PAC campaign for 2018 has already started, but for now let us enjoy our success in exceeding the 2017 goal!

Thank you again for your contributions, and please accept our sincere congratulations for your part in this outstanding accomplishment!

Monty Druin, P.E., PTOE.
Ramey Kemp & Associates
President ACEC/NC

Scott Hinesley, P.E.
REI Engineers, Inc.
Vice President/PAC Champion

Gary Hartong, P.E.
The Wooten Company
President - Elect/PAC Champion

James A. Smith, Jr., P.E.
Executive Director ACEC/NC

ACEC/NC PAC (STATE PAC) and ENGINEERING COMPANIES FOR NORTH CAROLINA (ECNC) –

With the coming mid-term elections later in 2018, our new State PAC (ACEC NC PAC) and Independent Expenditure (ECNC) are gearing up for the coming election season. To help build a war chest and support friends of our industry in the legislature, ACEC NC PAC is planning a series of new events around the Triangle to raise funds. These were highlighted in the recent Survey sent to all members, so be sure to take the quick quiz and vote on events that you would like to attend. Also, keep your eye on the ACEC NC PAC page on our website as we will soon have the capability of taking your contributions on-line. The State PAC also supported Rep. Dean Arp and Sen. Bill Rabon at recent events around the State.

ECNC has been busy meeting with key legislators and stake holders, including Reps. Torbett and Arp and Senators Berger and Rabon, as well as Lt. Gov. Dan Forrest. Of specific note is the growing interest in a potential Transportation Bond later in 2018. We will keep you apprised of any news on this front as it develops.
STATE UPDATE

Until the start of the 2018 Short Session in mid-May, the State legislature continues to hold Committee meetings in Raleigh and at various locations around the state. We continue to participate in those meetings related to transportation and infrastructure funding, as well as NCDOT and NCDEQ oversight. As always, we’ll continue to pass on news that affects our member firms. Thursday evening, January 18th, while most of central North Carolina was enjoying the second of two snow days, the US Supreme Court issued a stay that allows North Carolina to hold elections as scheduled for its congressional districts that were ruled unconstitutional recently by a lower court. North Carolina Republicans are still hoping for a similar action regarding its state legislative districts so there is still uncertainty surrounding NC 2018 elections. Stay Tuned….

FEDERAL UPDATE

Two items for your attention: (1) an update on the government shutdown, and (2) a leaked document containing the Administration’s infrastructure funding principles. First, Congress has extended funding for federal agencies through February 8. Reset your shutdown clocks accordingly! There is a lot of work to be done in the intervening period, including continued negotiations on a top-line budget total.

For future reference, if you’re interested in the shutdown procedures for the U.S. DOT, you can read them here: U.S. DOT Operations During a Lapse in Appropriations. In short, FHWA employees continue to work uninterrupted, because their salaries are paid from the Highway Trust Fund and highway programs are authorized through 2020. Personnel essential to public health and safety, including air traffic controllers and aviation and rail safety inspectors, also continue to work. Most FTA employees would be furloughed because they are paid from the General Fund through annual appropriations.

Second, the other big news of the day is a leaked six-page paper outlining the funding principles of the Administration’s infrastructure proposal. A copy of that document is available at this link. This document was originally obtained and circulated by Politico. A White House spokesperson declined to comment.

The plan involves five pots of funding:

- Incentive grants for additional state/local/private investment (50 percent of funding)
- Rural infrastructure program (25 percent)
- “Transformative and innovative” projects (10 percent)
- Federal credit programs, such as TIFIA, WIFIA, and RRIF (7 percent)
- Federal capital fund for federal property acquisition (5 percent)

There is broad eligibility for the incentive grants, including surface transportation, airports, maritime and inland waterways, flood control, water supply, hydropower, water resources, drinking water, storm water facilities, brownfields and Superfund sites. Funding would be limited to a 20/80 federal cost share, and the funding criteria includes a “look back” period for revenue measures in recent years.

The rural program would include both formula grants, calculated using ratios of rural highway lane miles and population, and discretionary performance grants. Eligibility includes transportation, broadband, drinking water and wastewater, power and electric generation, transmission and distribution, and water resource projects.

The plan also lays out recommendations for expanded eligibility for Private Activity Bond financing, additional tolling authority on interstates, and several other financing measures. It does not include any reference to fixing the Highway Trust Fund or how the additional funding would be offset.

One item of potential concern in the proposal: Federal requirements would not apply to rural block grants or to other projects with de minimis federal cost share. It’s not clear to what requirements this may be referring, but you can be sure that ACEC will fight to retain QBS and other important procurement protections.

We will continue to review the elements of the proposal and coordinate with our stakeholder partners on advancing a robust and meaningful infrastructure funding measure. We expect additional details to be released from the Administration around the State of the Union address.

~James Smith, P.E.

HENRY A. STIKES, JR. SEPTEMBER 10, 1927 TO JANUARY 17, 2018

Long time ACEC/NC Executive Director, Henry A. Stikes, Jr. passed away in Glasgow, Virginia on January 17, 2018.

Mr. Stikes served ACEC/NC (then CEC of North Carolina) for many years as Executive Director, retiring in the early 2000’s.

A C E C / N C ’ s Engineering Excellence “Grand Conceptor Award” is named in Henry’s honor.
**Members in the News**

Dewberry announces four NC additions:

**DEWBERRY WELCOMES ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING EXPERT DARREN EVEN**
Senior planner with more than a decade of experience joins firm to support environmental planning efforts

Fairfax, VA—December 7, 2017 Dewberry, a privately held professional services firm, announced that Darren Even, AICP, has been hired as a senior planner. Even is based in the firm’s Charlotte, North Carolina, office and also works closely with team members and clients served by the Raleigh, North Carolina, office.

Even joins the firm with nearly 15 years of experience in the preparation of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) studies, demographic reports and community impact studies, and environmental analyses for transportation projects involving environmental justice, Section 4(f) and 6(f) resources, and right-of-way impacts. In addition to his experience as a NEPA planner, Even also brings expertise in assessing U.S. Census data as it relates to environmental analysis of community impacts and environmental justice. As a senior planner, he is involved with the firm’s North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) projects. Prior to joining the firm, Even worked for Atkins, where he performed various environmental assessments across the country, including an Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision for the East Corridor Commuter Rail Line between Denver International Airport and Union Station in Denver, Colorado.

“We’re excited to welcome Darren to our team,” said Dewberry Associate Beth Smyre, PE. “As we continue to expand our environmental engineering capabilities in this region, Darren’s background with NEPA and community studies is critical to our growth.” [MORE]

**TODD BROOKS JOINS DEWBERRY’S TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT**
For Immediate Release

Fairfax, VA | 12.06.2017 Brooks to provide senior transportation engineering and management services in firm’s Raleigh, North Carolina, office.

Dewberry announced that Todd Brooks, PE, has been hired as a senior associate and manager of the traffic engineering group in the firm’s Raleigh, North Carolina, office.

With more than 30 years of experience in traffic engineering, Brooks’ experience includes intelligent transportation systems (ITS) and transportation planning with a primary focus on projects executed on behalf of municipalities and various state departments of transportation, including Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia. In his new role as traffic engineering group manager for Dewberry, Brooks will be heavily involved in supporting the firm’s various transportation projects across the state. His technical expertise includes traffic signal plans, traffic impact studies, computerized signal system feasibility studies and designs, ITS design, signing and pavement marking plans, parking studies, and traffic analyses. Previously, Brooks worked as a senior project manager and technical manager for Atkins where he oversaw various project types, including urban street improvements, traffic studies, work zone traffic control, airports, signing, and design-build. [MORE]

**DEWBERRY ANNOUNCES THE PROMOTION OF DAN SOUTHWICK**
Southwick to lead firm’s national design-build practice

Fairfax, VA—January 8, 2018 Dewberry, a privately held professional services firm, is pleased to announce the promotion of Dan Southwick, PE, to president of the firm’s design-build practice, which includes projects in the telecommunications and higher education market segments as well as turnkey services for federal and commercial clients. In this new role, Southwick is responsible for the oversight of more than 25 individuals who work in the design-build practice. In addition to his new responsibilities, Southwick will maintain his leadership responsibility as the telecommunications market segment leader. He is based in the firm’s Raleigh, office.

Southwick has more than three decades of experience and joined the firm nearly two years ago. His expertise includes construction, engineering operations, production, planning, financial reporting, purchasing, and site development. Additionally, Southwick’s extensive portfolio includes turnkey delivery of projects for large telecommunications clients. “Over the past few years, Dewberry has been growing its construction practice,” says Dewberry Chief Executive Officer Donald E. Stone. “Dan has the leadership skills and capacity to expand this part of our business to meet our goals.”

“What’s exciting about design-build is the ability to discover truly creative approaches to complex projects,” says Southwick. “I’m humbled to have been selected for this position and am looking forward to expanding our ability to be the primary service provider to our clients.”

Southwick earned a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering from the University of Buffalo (1986).

**POWER GENERATION EXPERT JOE ESTRADA JOINS DEWBERRY**
Estrada joins firm’s expanding energy division

Fairfax, VA—January 10, 2018 Dewberry, a privately held professional services firm, announced that Joe Estrada, PE, has joined the firm’s energy infrastructure group as a power generation expert and senior project manager based in the firm’s Raleigh, North Carolina, office.

With more than 10 years’ experience in the power generation industry, Estrada’s expertise includes environmental compliance strategy, renewables, project management, and long-term planning and strategy. Prior to joining the firm, he worked as a regional sales engineer for Combustion Technologies Corporation in Apex, North Carolina. Earlier in his career, Estrada served as a strategic engineer for a large power company based in the Southeast. In his new role as senior project manager, he is responsible for expanding the firm’s balance of plant capabilities throughout the southeast region.

Estrada earned bachelor’s degrees in mechanical engineering and aero-space engineering from the University of Florida (2005) and is a member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers. His publications include “Combustion Optimization Through Air Flow and Coal Flow Balancing,” which appeared in Power Engineering magazine in 2011.

![Image of Darren Even](image1)

**Contact ACEC/NC: 919-781-7934 or info@acecnc.org**

...continued on p.8
Wendi Johnson, PE, has joined Gannett Fleming as a senior construction/transportation manager after a nearly 30-year career with NCDOT. In her new role, she will provide leadership in construction-phase services for bridges and highways, ITS systems, wetland mitigation, and stream restoration as well as preconstruction activities, including traffic management, construction sequencing, and constructability reviews.

“The continued growth in North Carolina brings with it increased transportation infrastructure needs, including maintenance, construction and operations,” Wendi said. “I’m excited and eager to provide innovative solutions to our clients as they meet the needs of all North Carolina residents.”

Learn more about Wendi — with North Carolina State University

Dec.12th: JIM SMITH Tweeted:

Rep. Chris Millis receiving @ACEC_NC 2017 Keystone Award as “Legislator of the Year” for his work while in the NC General Assembly House from @MontyIrvin, President of ACEC/NC, and @JSmithacecnc #thanks for your service to our industry.
TOP TEN REASONS TO JOIN ACEC NORTH CAROLINA

1. Mobilizes the collective strength of more than 200 engineering firms into a powerful political voice for the engineering industry at the North Carolina General Assembly.

2. Promotes legislative, regulatory, and judicial actions of critical importance to the engineering industry, including contracting out and investment in water, transportation, building, and energy infrastructure.

3. Advances tort reform and professional liability protections to shield engineering firms from frivolous lawsuits; and advances tax and regulatory reforms to benefit the industry.

4. Protects and promotes Qualification-Based Selection (QBS) at the state and local levels.

5. Supports pro-industry engineers and pro-business legislators in the General Assembly through our State PAC (ACEC NC PAC).

6. Supports pro-business initiatives through the industry’s only Independent Expenditure entity (ECNC).

7. Strengthens member firm’s bottom lines through business-focused educational programming, publications, committees, and forums.

8. Brings industry leaders and clients together at state-wide conferences and meetings to discuss key issues and partners with other A/E/C industry organizations to promote common goals.

9. Delivers the latest updates and analysis on key issues affecting engineering firms through e-mail alerts, bi-monthly NC reports, and regular legislative updates.

10. Provides significant cost savings to member firms through the ACEC Business Insurance Trust, ACEC Life/Health Trust, ACEC Retirement Trust, and other programs.

Our members
Hit the Jackpot with an evening where everyone was a winner!

This member event featured the Annual Holiday Silent Auction and “Vegas Style” Games of Chance manned by professional dealers. Both of the evening’s activities Benefited ACEC/PAC (our national PAC).

Contact ACEC/NC: 919-781-7934 or info@acecnc.org
The pipeline faces strenuous opposition from environmental groups but appears to be on schedule to come online in late 2018. Draper Aden Associates has been working on both the Mountain Valley and Atlantic Coast pipelines. “We’ve been providing geological surveys, water quality studies and assistance with environmental permitting,” says Principal/Executive Vice President Michael Lawless. “Now that we’re getting to the end of permitting, the opportunities move into the construction phase, and then after that, to the distribution lines off these pipelines.”

The 350-mile Mariner East 2 Pipeline will carry 275,000 barrels a day of natural gas liquids (NGL) from the Pittsburgh area to Marcus Hook on the Delaware River, just south of Philadelphia. From there, the NGL will be transported to other regions or exported, but there are also nascent plans to create an East Coast center for the transmission, storage and industrial use of natural gas.

“We’re working on environmental aspects of what’s being called the Philadelphia Energy Hub, says O’Hara. “We’re working on the restoration of brownfields to accommodate the expansion of production and staging materials produced from NGLs.”

The American Chemistry Council studied the potential impact of the new storage facility on the region, forecasting the construction of three additional ethane crackers and a wide range of spinoff industrial facilities. Overall, they estimate that the completed hub would generate $35.8 billion in capital investment by 2025, produce $28.4 billion in direct annual output, and create more than 100,000 jobs.

“COMPETING WITH MONT BELVIEU”

Rather than just provide natural gas to other regions over the next few decades, the Appalachian states are working together to create the nation’s second major petrochemical manufacturing hub. However, they face significant challenges.

“It’s a chicken-or-egg situation,” says Clay Riley, vice president of business development at The Thrasher Group. “There’s not a huge base of industrial consumers for natural gas in the region right now. It would be advantageous for them to come, but they want to see growth before they do. The first steps have been taken. In 2016, Shell Chemicals began construction near Pittsburgh on an estimated $6 billion ethane cracker plant, which will convert natural gas products into ethylene and then into plastics. It is scheduled to come online early in the 2020s. In a press release, Shell said the location is ideal because the plant is within a 700-mile radius of more than 70 percent of U.S. polyethylene customers.

In mid-2017, PTT Global Chemical America purchased a 168-acre site on the Ohio River near Wheeling, West Virginia, with the intention of building a $6 billion ethane cracker plant. The catalyst to spur future industrial investment could be the development of a NGL storage facility in the Ohio River Valley similar to Mont Belvieu. Just east of Houston, Mont Belvieu has a storage capacity of about 110 million NGL barrels. The Ohio hub would have a capacity of 75 million to 100 million barrels. With an associated 500 miles of additional pipeline, the total investment would be about $10 billion.

The office is closed on the following holidays:
- New Years Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day

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