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**West Virginia University-led team lays foundation for
regional natural gas liquids storage “hub”**

Findings will help strengthen Ohio’s supply chain

Cleveland, Ohio – August 29, 2017 – It is no secret that the region around Ohio, West Virginia and Pennsylvania has abundant natural gas resources, but can the three states uncover the keys to turning those resources into economic growth? West Virginia University-led research may have some of the answers.

On August 29, WVU is releasing to the public [a study](#) that shows how the region can support storage facilities that are critical for attracting petrochemical and related industries to the area. Researchers will present the data at a [technical workshop](#) in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, hosted by the [Eastern Petroleum Technology Transfer Council, PTTC](#), at WVU.

“This study helps us to better understand how the geology in the region would support potential underground storage of natural gas liquids,” said JobsOhio Senior Managing Director Dana Saucier. “This information is a valuable asset to support our expanding petrochemical industry and can strengthen the position of our region for future downstream investment.”

“Appalachia is poised for a renaissance of the petrochemical industry due to the availability of natural gas liquids,” said [Brian Anderson](#), director of the [WVU Energy Institute](#) who helped secure the funding to conduct the work. “A critical path for this rebirth is through the development of infrastructure to support the industry.”

Led by [Doug Patchen](#), director of the WVU [Appalachian Oil and Natural Gas Consortium](#) and the Eastern PTTC, researchers from the geological surveys in West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Ohio studied geologic formations that could offer suitable locations for developers to build underground facilities to store natural gas liquids from Marcellus and Utica wells.

The team identified and mapped all potential options for subsurface storage of natural gas liquids along the Ohio River from southwestern Pennsylvania to eastern Kentucky, and the Kanawha River in West Virginia. Previously, the consortium had conducted studies of the Marcellus and Utica shale gas plays. Results from those studies have been used by both small producers such as Northeast Natural Energy and large multinationals such as Exxon and have helped fuel the region’s shale gas boom.

This latest project was conducted as part of the Tri-State Shale Coalition, an innovative cross-border collaboration between Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia and a critical key for unlocking the region's economic opportunity, according to its members.

The Coalition was created following a collaborative agreement signed in October 2015 by Governors' offices in West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. Charter members include the Benedum Foundation, a charitable organization, and Team NEO, the Allegheny Conference on Community Development and Vision Shared, all non-profit economic development organizations in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia.

A public-private partnership, the coalition brings together workforce development organizations, academic institutions such as WVU, and economic development groups to strategically advance the area as a "super-region" for petrochemical, plastics fabrication and advanced manufacturing jobs and investments.

"Recognition of the enormous opportunity for economic development based upon shale gas, including downstream modern manufacturing, was the motivation for the Governors of West Virginia, Ohio, and Pennsylvania to agree to collaborate to maximize the opportunity," said William Getty, Benedum Foundation president.

"The results of the study will be a valuable tool for our already strong manufacturing base in Northeast Ohio," said Team NEO Vice President Paul Boulter, "Being able to store valuable feedstock will help develop midstream and downstream opportunities that will make us even more competitive on a global and national basis."

"Having natural gas liquids storage capacity in the greater region is critical to fully realizing the potential of the shale gas resources found in our three states. Shell's decision to build a world-scale petrochemical facility here is game-changing and shines a spotlight on fresh opportunities in this part of the country. Natural gas storage will do the same – positioning us to attract additional ethane crackers and other petrochemical investments, as well as supporting further upstream and midstream development," said David Ruppertsberger, president of the Pittsburgh Regional Alliance, the economic development marketing affiliate of the Allegheny Conference.

The WVU Energy Institute secured \$100,000 from the Benedum Foundation to support the study. That amount was matched by a total of \$100,000 more from AEP, Antero, Blue Racer, Charleston Area Alliance, Chevron, Dominion, EQT, First Energy/Team NEO, Mountaineer NGL Storage LLC, Noble Energy, Southwestern Energy, XTO Energy and the West Virginia Oil and Natural Gas Association.

About Team NEO

Team NEO is an economic development organization focused on creating jobs for Northeast Ohio's residents. In collaboration with our partners, it leads the region's business attraction efforts, supports business retention and expansion work as Northeast Ohio's JobsOhio affiliate, accelerates the impact of innovation in the region, and aligns strategies and resources within the economic development network to maximize its impact. In addition, Team NEO provides tools to assist employers in attracting talent to the region. For more information, visit clevelandplus.com.

Team NEO works with its state partners – JobsOhio and the Appalachian Partnership for Economic Growth – to help advance economic opportunities presented by the Marcellus and Utica Shales.

About the Tri-State Shale Coalition

The Tri-State Shale Coalition represents the region of Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia working together to build a global petrochemical hub. This “super-region” is on the verge of potential, game-changing petrochemical, plastics fabrication and advanced manufacturing jobs and investment thanks to shale gas. Public and private partners representing workforce development, academia and economic development in the tri-state region recognize this opportunity and are visibly and strategically aligned to promote the super region as the new “Global Petrochemical Hub.” At its foundation is the 2015 Tri-State Regional Cooperation Agreement, a collaboration agreement signed by Lt. Governor Mary Taylor of Ohio, Governor Tom Wolf of Pennsylvania, and Governor Earl Ray Tomblin of West Virginia which signified an unprecedented level of cross-border cooperation.

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