



Gas pipelines represent prosperity

The Marcellus Shale is bringing good jobs and cleaner air to Pennsylvania

DAVID SPIGELMYER AND JAMES KUNZ

SEP 5, 2016

12:00 AM

We often read and hear about the need to expand natural gas pipelines and associated infrastructure. From Mariner East to PennEast to Atlantic Sunrise and many more, state and federal regulators are weighing the approval of thousands of miles of critical energy infrastructure.



MENU



central question — why? Why is natural gas infrastructure so important for the commonwealth?

Natural gas pipelines — which Pennsylvania’s hardworking and highly skilled building trade union members safely construct — are the cornerstone to realizing shale’s economic and environmental benefits. What’s more, this infrastructure is unquestionably the safest way to transport energy, as 99.999 percent of crude oil and petroleum products delivered by pipeline reach their destination safely, according to a new report.

ADVERTISEMENT

Providing an economic shot in the arm when we needed it most, the historic energy revolution that took off right across Appalachia is breathing much-needed life into union halls and creating new opportunities for local laborers who are well-trained and take enormous pride in the work they’re privileged to do. This game-changing opportunity — enabled by strong, sustainable natural gas production — is helping to spur new apprentice programs to train the next generation of skilled workers to build future shale-driven



partnership among our region's building trades unions, energy producers and pipeline companies is worth taking stock in and celebrating.

And as the industry continues to mature, demand for a nimble, ready-to-execute local labor force is growing.

Consider the Mariner East II project, which represents a \$3 billion infrastructure investment which is expected to create nearly 30,000 jobs — many of which require the precision and expertise of construction trade union members. At the same time, these energy projects are spurring a regional manufacturing renaissance — an industrial rebirth that's generating new job-creating construction, development and expansions.

ADVERTISEMENT

Take the recently announced Shell ethane cracker project in Beaver County, for example. This project, which represents the largest investment made in Pennsylvania since World War II, is expected to create 6,000 construction jobs and support 600



What's playing out before us right now represents a classic American success, or turnaround, story — and it's one that we should all be proud of and grateful for.

For hardworking, middle-class families throughout the commonwealth, pipelines are delivering significant energy savings that give strained household budgets a little extra, and much-needed, room. America's emergence as a global energy production leader has helped lower the cost of living and reduce household energy costs by as much as 25 percent for homes relying on natural gas, according to recent federal data.

With natural gas, we no longer are forced to choose between growing our economy or improving our environment. Thankfully, we can have both. As Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Patrick McDonnell recently said, Pennsylvania's air quality "continues to improve," reflecting the benefits of producing and using more clean-burning natural gas that's safely developed right here at home. These significant air-quality benefits are being realized at the national level, too, as America has reduced its carbon emissions more than any other nation, thanks in large part to greater natural gas production and its use in electric power generation.

Safely developing and modernizing Pennsylvania's natural gas infrastructure network — made possible by local laborers and an industry that shares the commitment for a more prosperous future — will ensure that our air will continue to improve, that job opportunities will be there for those seeking work and that our nation will further reduce its dependence on unstable and often unfriendly regions of the world to meet our growing energy



progress is set into motion and is generating jobs for future generations.

David Spigelmyer is president of the Marcellus Shale Coalition. James Kunz is business manager for International Union of Operating Engineers Local 66.

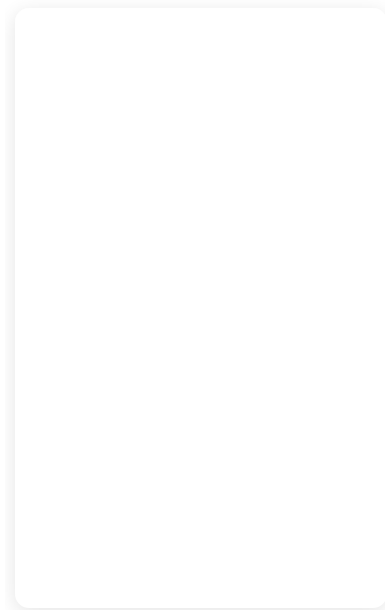
First Published September 5, 2016, 12:00am

Popular in the Community



AdChoices

Sponsored



SHOW COMMENTS (0)