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SPRING 2023

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**Hess electrifies Bakken rigs to reduce greenhouse
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Message from the editor
SHAYNA WIWIERSKI

MESSAGE

Welcome to the latest issue of *Bakken Oil Report* magazine! As always, we are dedicated to bringing you the latest news, trends, and analysis of oil and gas in the Bakken region.

In this issue, we take a closer look at the positive and negative impacts of oil exploration. As Vision West ND mentions on page 20, the impact of the oil boom has had a significant impact on the behavioral health of the communities in the region. The trade-off is complex, as the health impacts of the oil industry in western North Dakota are multifaceted, but the economic benefits have been many and have improved the quality of life for many in the region.

We also delve into workforce issues in the Bakken, and as the North Dakota Petroleum Council mentions on page 16, there is a new program in place, being managed by Lt. Governor Brent Sanford, which is an innovative way to bring in new workers to the Bakken region through immigration. The first phase of the Bakken

GROW program will be recruiting workers from Ukraine through humanitarian sponsorships of legal immigrants with assistance of firms specializing in immigration.

As always, we feature profiles of leading figures in the industry, providing insight into their experiences and perspectives. We also highlight key trends in the industry and the major players who are making North Dakota one of the best oil and gas producing states in America.

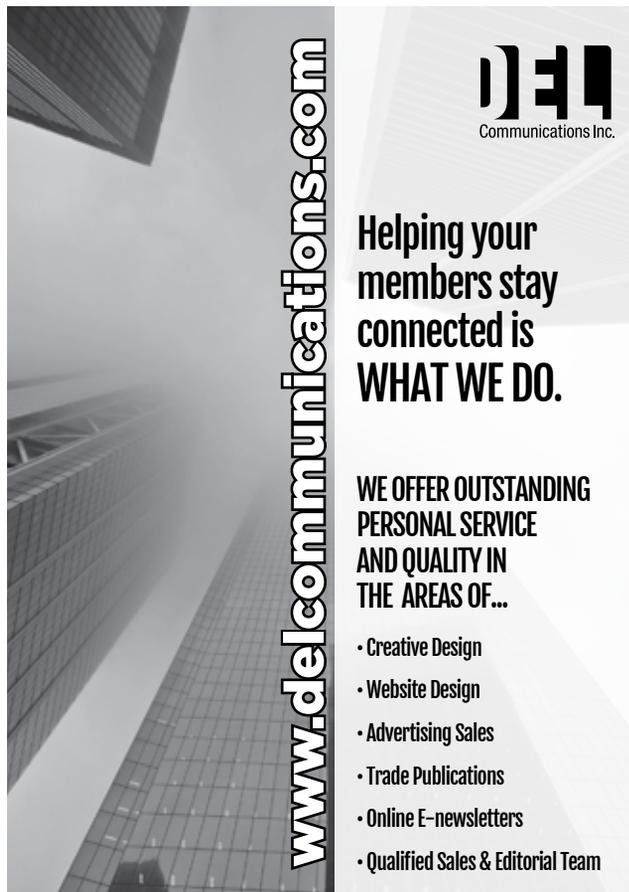
We hope you enjoy this issue of *Bakken Oil Report* magazine, and we welcome your feedback and suggestions for future topics.

Sincerely,

Shayna Wiwierski

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The reality is simple – we need more energy supply to bring down prices for American consumers

The cost of energy is built into the price of every good and service across our economy. This point is made clear by the historic levels of inflation that have impacted our nation in recent years. Due to the Biden administration's harmful environmental policies, American consumers and businesses are paying more at the pump, with gasoline prices staying well over a dollar per gallon higher since President Biden took office. At the same time, electricity and natural gas prices have soared, cutting significantly into household budgets just to keep the lights on. We cannot afford to continue undermining U.S. energy production. The simple fact is that we need to increase oil and gas supply to bring down energy prices and reduce inflation.

Despite this reality, the Biden administration has sought from day one to curtail U.S. energy production in pursuit of their Green New Deal agenda. This includes cancelling the Keystone XL Pipeline, locking away taxpayer-owned energy resources and giving in to lawsuits from their environmentalist allies, while imposing \$739 billion in new taxes on energy producers and increasing production fees on federal lands by 50 percent. Such an approach not only reduces production, but constrains our ability to get energy to market, and the numbers speak for themselves.

At the end of 2022, U.S. oil production was nearly 900,000 barrels per day (bpd) below pre-pandemic levels, and U.S. oil refining capacity declined from 19 million bpd in 2019 to 17.9 million bpd. Given the cumbersome regulatory policies put in place by President Biden, recovering from such losses will take far too long. Approvals for major energy projects take upwards of 4.5 years, and the pending expansions at U.S. refineries will not even make up for recent reductions in capacity.

President Biden needs to change course and take the handcuffs off U.S. domestic energy production. Our nation can achieve

energy security and independence once again, utilizing all of our abundant energy resources and treating our oil, gas and coal reserves as one of our greatest strategic assets. That's exactly what I'm working to do every day, advancing legislation to provide needed regulatory relief, respect property rights and unlock America's energy potential.

Specifically, I'm sponsoring legislation that would remove the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) permitting requirement when the federal government owns less than half of the mineral rights in a drilling spacing unit and has no surface rights in the impacted area. Doing so would remove duplicative regulations, reduce production costs and better respect the rights of private mineral holders. I've also introduced bills that would:

- Prevent unnecessary delays for important cross-border energy projects, such as pipelines and electrical transmission lines.
 - This is accomplished by prohibiting the president from unilaterally revoking permits for projects like Keystone XL, and instead placing the decision-making into the hands of the appropriate agencies.
- Streamline the approval of natural gas projects needed to get energy to market.
 - This bill would ensure better coordination during, and set deadlines for, multi-agency National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) reviews of natural gas projects.

Such reforms are just part of our broader efforts to promote a more energy-secure America, support a growing economy and lower costs for hardworking families. That's what our nation needs right now, and it's why we will continue to press President Biden and his administration to abandon their failed policies and join with us in advancing these important priorities for our nation. ▀

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North Dakota, U.S. oil and natural gas production and American Energy Security

By Holly Hopkins

America's national security is closely linked to American energy security. The freedom we enjoy is enabled by access to reliable, affordable energy – for homes and businesses, transportation and countless products that make our lives better – provided by oil and natural gas.

Sometimes we take energy security for granted – flipping a light switch, heating up coffee, jumping in the car to go on vacation – but we shouldn't. That's a lesson we at the American Petroleum Institute (API) convey daily in conversations with policymakers and the public in Washington, Bismarck and elsewhere.

The importance of American-made energy, like the kind produced in North Dakota, is probably most appreciated when geopolitics threaten to interrupt supply. For example, OPEC's out-of-the-blue crude oil production cut of more than one-million barrels per day, starting in May, ignited concern that impacts of tighter global markets might be felt not only around the world, but in our neighborhoods, too.

North Dakota is one of several states deeply involved in producing the energy that has helped shield Americans from many of the dangers posed by constricted global supply. Per the U.S. Energy Information Administration, North Dakota ranked third among all 50 states in crude oil production in 2020 and 10th in natural gas. Only Texas had larger crude oil reserves than North Dakota, and the state's natural gas reserves were the nation's third largest.

It's no exaggeration to say that North Dakota is a linchpin of American energy security, with oil and natural gas supplying nearly 70 per cent of the energy Americans used in 2021. They are projected to remain the largest energy sources for America – and the world – decades from now.

Domestic production has reduced our country's reliance on foreign energy sources. That's a good thing. While concerning, OPEC's announcement isn't crippling, as it might have been at other times in our history. We have the oil and natural gas

resources in North Dakota, in other states and offshore to help meet domestic needs and help allies abroad through the delivery of our abundant energy. That isn't just beneficial for our friends overseas; production to support American deliveries of liquefied natural gas and oil helps stimulate job creation and economic growth here at home as well.

The OPEC announcement underscores these points. Members of the group make market decisions that suit their own interests. America's best posture is to increase supply – and reduce the potential effects of decisions made by foreign suppliers.

My organization's 2023 State of American Energy report detailed the pathways to fully harness America's energy resources.

Think of our proposals under the heading of "Make, Move and Improve" – make more American energy, safely move energy where it's needed, and improve our industry's operations and products at every turn. Key to moving energy is building needed infrastructure, and key to infrastructure is Washington's ability to reform permitting and review processes.

The blueprint dovetails well with API's Climate Action Framework, which identifies ways our nearly 600 member companies, the government, families and businesses can work together to meet the challenge of keeping the world supplied with energy while building a lower carbon future. A big part of the climate piece is continuous advances in the technologies and methodologies that help reduce methane emissions associated with oil and natural gas.

This is the state of play for American oil and natural gas. We're reminded of the stakes tied to the success of this industry because little progress happens, or can happen, without affordable, reliable energy. North Dakota and the tens of thousands of workers associated with oil and natural gas production are key to that success.

Holly Hopkins is vice president of Upstream Policy at the American Petroleum Institute in Washington, DC. ▸



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North Dakota – Open for business



North Dakota's new Energy and Economic Coordination Office (ECCO) resulted from a recent reorganization of the North Dakota Department of Commerce Economic Development and Finance Division's energy-related portfolio. The primary objective of ECCO is to help coordinate energy-related projects in the state and provide more efficient solutions for energy operators.

"New business interest in our state not only increases our value-added products with positive economic benefits but also strengthens our existing operations," says Tom Oakland, ECCO manager. "Using energy production near the source is efficient and environmentally sustainable."

North Dakota's energy industry has seen significant growth over the years, exporting over ten times as much crude

oil as processed within our borders, and nearly 85 per cent of its natural gas. On top of oil and gas exports, more electricity is provided outside of the state than is consumed in-state. Despite our growing population and robust economy, increased production will only exacerbate the need for greater exports going forward.

The state's Energy and Economic Coordination Office focuses on energy asset development with an "all of the above" approach. As demand continues to grow both internally and with our customers outside our borders, North Dakota must plan to continue economical options for energy consumers.

Transporting energy has proven to be difficult with regulatory requirements and various political factors. North

Dakota must look to increase the utilization of our resources within our borders with the intention of lowering our dependence on imports of material and goods.

For example, over the next decade, our state is projected to nearly double its production of natural gas.

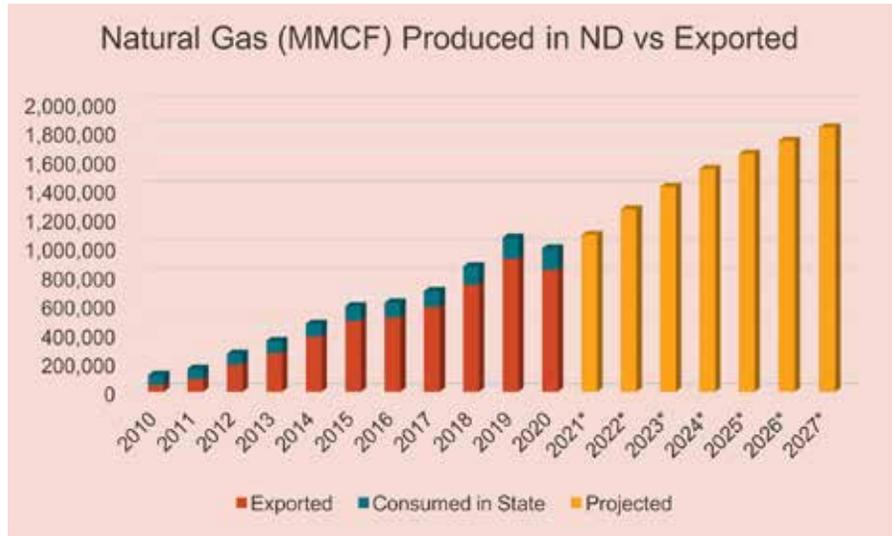
"North Dakota is blessed with incredible natural gas and natural gas liquids resources," says Justin Kringstad, executive director of North Dakota Pipeline Authority. "Production is expected to grow aggressively, and abundant volumes provide incredible local opportunities for new industrial projects."

Though demand for this resource exists nationwide along with liquified natural gas (LNG) shipped across both oceans, North Dakota must utilize

“Production is expected to grow aggressively, and abundant volumes provide incredible local opportunities for new industrial projects.”

resources locally, minimizing the need for additional pipelines and industrial facility expansion elsewhere. Utilizing our local resources ensure continued production and lowers the chance of curtailed oil. Reliance on pipelines out of state may be problematic, especially as new policies dictate which fuels and carbon intensities are permitted.

Beyond these benefits, North Dakota may also produce value-added products to benefit other sectors in the state.



Consider our reliance on fertilizer imports for production. Why follow global markets for supply when the feedstock exists locally?

“Our state has tremendous opportunities in value-added energy ahead if we are able to find synergies between agriculture and the utilization of our

rich abundant Bakken natural gas,” says Ron Ness, president of North Dakota Petroleum Council.

For this and many other energy projects, North Dakota has the resources to sustain production while offering high-paying career opportunities for upcoming generations. ▶

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Tier 2 is new Tier 1 as Williston E&Ps adapt to maturing basin

The last year has seen a fair amount of discussion concerning shale well degradation, particularly in the Permian, where most operators have shifted to co-development to mitigate child well drilling issues and take a more balanced approach to developing portfolios with multiple target zones of varying productivity.

In a Q1 interview with CNBC, Pioneer Natural Resources CEO Scott Sheffield said most companies are drilling Tier 2 and Tier 3 locations at this point—a state of affairs he said will make it difficult for U.S. oil production to return to the pre-pandemic high of 13 MMbo/d reached in November 2019, combined with E&P companies’ conservative approach to capex and focus on free cash flow and a

lack of refining capital.

Nowhere is the inventory quality issue more in play than the Bakken; America’s shale oil OG is considered a mature basin where the best inventory has been drilled. However, operators have been making adjustments and are reporting positive results.

Asked by an analyst about well degradation in a Jan. 5 conference presentation, Bakken driller Hess Corp.’s CEO John Hess said that by changing its well spacing and frac intensity, the company had delivered initial 180-day volumes and EURs for Tier 2 wells that were comparable to Tier 1.

“Obviously, what we drill five years from now is going to have more challenges in terms of EUR and IPs but we’re

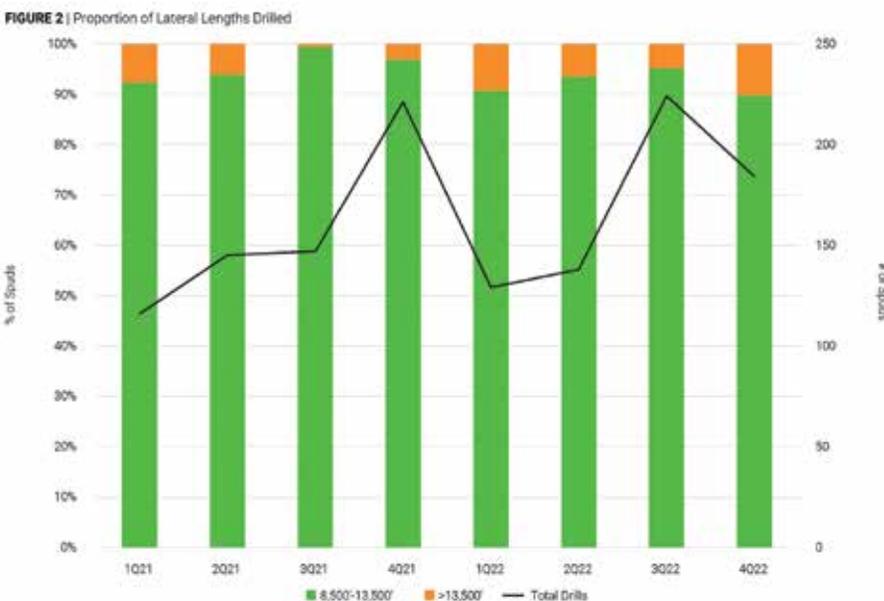
not seeing it yet,” Hess said, praising the industry’s innovation and the company’s high-resource-quality acreage for maintaining high productivity from the play. “What the quality of the IP180s and also the EURs are five years from now, I think that’s open for debate. But that was a debate we had five years ago on the Tier 2s when they hit.”

During 2022, many Williston operators noted improvements in their well productivity, which they attributed to multiple factors. Comments by Chord Energy and Enerplus encapsulate what companies across the basin have been saying.

Chord Energy has been utilizing wider spacing and, as a result, experiencing minimal parent/child interference and strong productivity. The company’s vintage design utilized 10 to 14 wells per drilling spacing unit, a density that the company found to be suboptimal. It is currently using four to six wells per DSU. In a case study at its Indian Hills area, the company found that it can get the same productivity out of one DSU with five wells as from an 11- to 12-well DSU. Additionally, F&D costs are 40 percent lower, and net present value per DSU increased by \$40 million. Another benefit to the upspacing is reduced cycle times from spud to first production.

Enerplus is also utilizing wider spacing after finding four wells per DSU to be

Enverus intelligence® | Research 04/18/23 "Bakken 3-Milers | Stretching Dollars by Extending Laterals.



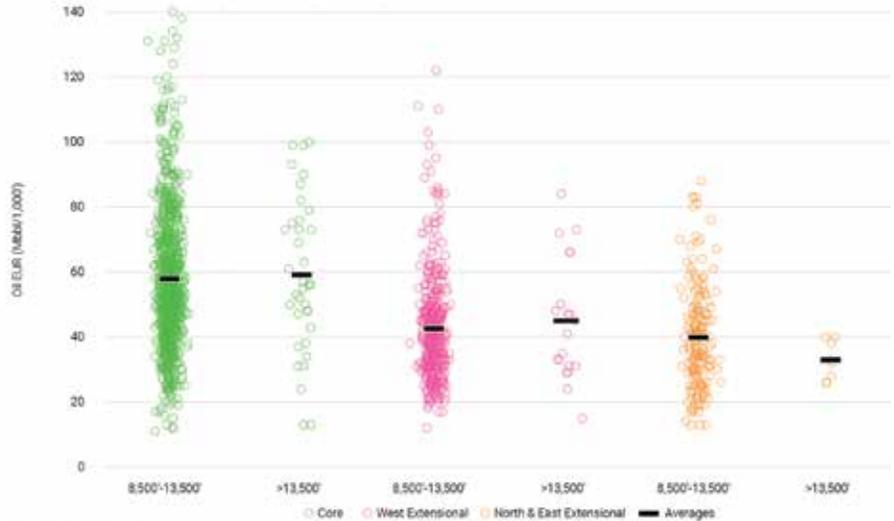
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optimal for its operations. Last year, the company's well performance exceeded its own expectations. And while the company said the 2022 drilling locations were among its high-quality inventory, completion optimization also led to incremental improvements. Furthermore, Enerplus has taken a unit-by-unit approach to its performance in the play.

"We take a very customized approach to the design for every unit, taking into account everything we know about the subsurface, the geology, the reservoir conditions and everything we know about all of the offsetting producing wells, etc.," Enerplus COO Wade Hutchings told analysts on August 5, 2022. "And so what that ends up resulting in is a very customized program where we will optimize the number of wells we put in the Middle Bakken and the Three Forks, where they're landed, how many, how they're spaced, how they're spaced relative to existing producers, how we think about the actual frac design in terms of subtle changes in proppant loading, and then also integrating that with how we'll flow those wells back and then put them on the initial artificial lift."

Beyond upspacing, Chord is drilling more three-mile laterals after completing its first such wells in 2022. Of the company's

FIGURE 3 | Per-Foot Oil Recoveries by Lateral Length Grouping



Note: Includes 2020+ wells.
Source: Enerplus Case

remaining inventory, 55 to 60 percent are suitable for three-milers. Chord says the benefits include a 20 percent reduction in well costs, a 40 to 50 percent increase in EURs and a 25 percent increase in IRRs.

North Dakota Department of Mineral Resources Director Lynn Helms said in an April 2022 report by Bismarck, N.D. television station KFVR that longer laterals will be a major part of go-forward development in the basin.

"The Tier 2 and Tier 3 areas of the Bakken are not going to be developed with two-mile laterals," said Helms. "They will be developed with three-mile and four-mile laterals, so that results in an adjustment

downwards in the number of wells that we'll drill on the landscape."

The number of 15,000 foot or longer laterals completed in the Williston annually has increased from fewer than 10 in 2017 to around 40 in 2022. Kraken Resources operates 16 of those 2022 wells, more than any other operator in the basin. The next most active three-miler operators were ExxonMobil with eight wells and Chord with six, based on available 2022 data. The number of three-mile wells brought online in 2023 is almost certain to increase due to Chord planning for half of its 90 to 94 operated completions this year to have 15,000-foot laterals. ▀



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Hess electrifies Bakken rigs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and lower energy costs

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE HESS CORP.



Hess Corporation has replaced diesel fuel with electricity to power its four Bakken drilling rigs – a project that, over the next five years, is expected to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions from these rigs by approximately 50 percent and energy costs from these rigs by nearly 70 percent. The change has also reduced truck traffic, noise and odors that result from delivery and use of diesel fuel.

If electrical power is interrupted, backup

diesel generators are immediately deployed to avoid drilling disruption. During the project's pilot in 2022, using electricity as the rigs' primary energy source increased reliability through the provision of a secondary power source. It is also expected to reduce drilling downtime.

To complete this project, Hess worked closely with Nabors Industries and Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative.

Canrig, an affiliate of Nabors, supplied a transformer and the equipment necessary to distribute utility power to the rig. Mountrail-Williams Electric installed highline power to the well pads and assisted in making a final connection to the distribution equipment on site.

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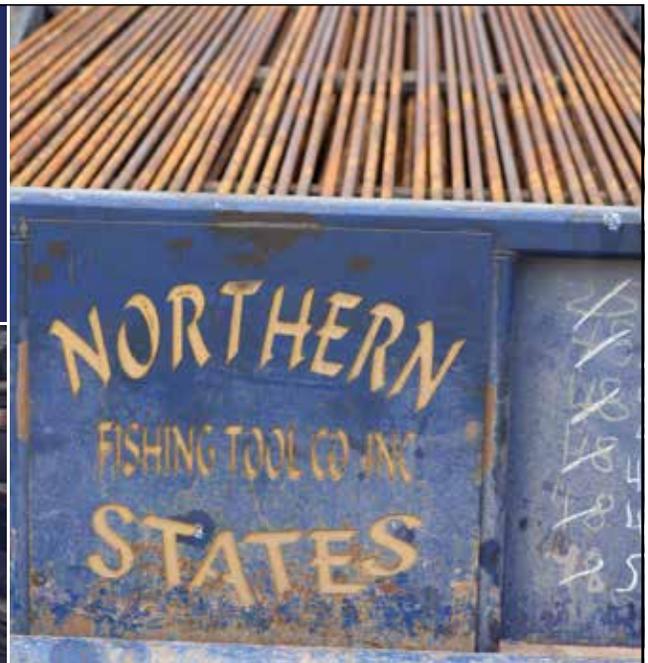
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North Dakota Petroleum Council creates Bakken GROW (Global Recruitment of Oilfield Workers) Program

By Reva Kautz, Communications Director at ND Petroleum Council



The Bakken GROW program will be an innovative way to bring new workers to the Bakken region through immigration.



NDPC's first phase of Bakken GROW will be recruiting workers from Ukraine through humanitarian sponsorships of legal immigrants with assistance from firms specializing in immigration.

The North Dakota Petroleum Council (NDPC) is responding to the workforce shortage for its oil and natural gas company members by creating a new program called Bakken GROW (Global Recruitment of Oilfield Workers). This program will be an innovative way to bring new workers to the Bakken region through immigration.

Bakken GROW will first utilize the new Uniting for Ukraine (U4U) streamlined immigration process to provide Ukrainian citizens, who have fled since Russia's invasion, an opportunity to come to the United States and work. U4U builds on the robust humanitarian assistance the U.S. government is providing trying to find hosts and jobs for Ukrainian citizens who have been displaced.

To assist with workforce development efforts, NDPC has contracted with former Lt. Governor Brent Sanford to be the project manager of Bakken GROW. Sanford will be the lead liaison between member companies and immigration recruitment agencies to assist with the process of bringing workers to North Dakota to work in the Bakken.

NDPC's first phase of Bakken GROW will be recruiting workers from Ukraine through humanitarian sponsorships of legal immigrants with assistance from firms specializing in immigration.

"The Bakken GROW program is a humanitarian mission and a workforce solution. The NDPC staff and member companies are excited to share the

hospitality of North Dakota and the tremendous Bakken career opportunities with a wider group of individuals," explains Sanford.

There are an estimated seven-million Ukrainian refugees displaced throughout Europe. Since the beginning of the war with Russia, over 100,000 Ukrainians have been allowed to enter the U.S. to find work. These refugees have either fulfilled their military obligation and/or have three or more children. The U4U program allows immediate work authorization to Ukrainians granted approval who are looking for job opportunities.

"They need our help. We need their help," said Ron Ness, president of NDPC.

Each U4U immigrant needs a sponsor

The U4U program allows immediate work authorization to Ukrainians granted approval who are looking for job opportunities.

before they can come to the United States. NDPC is looking for individuals who are willing to be a part of the solution. Consider sponsoring a Ukrainian so they can come to North Dakota. Those who want to volunteer to be a sponsor can sign up at <https://bit.ly/BakkenGROWSponsorForm>.

The Bakken GROW team is working with cities in North Dakota that will be receiving Ukrainian refugees including Dickinson, Minot, Williston, and Watford City. NDPC has already identified community liaisons in each city who will be responsible for their own Community Support Plan. Each community will be searching for local Ukrainians who can assist with being a translator and a source of information to help refugees in their first few months. "We are encouraging local leaders to partner with their Bakken GROW employers to welcome these new recruits into their communities," explains Sanford.

NDPC plans to welcome the first new workers to North Dakota by July 2023. Once NDPC has success placing immigrant workers with member employers, the goal is to reach out to other countries for potential workers. To learn more about NDPC's Bakken GROW program, you can find more details at <https://www.ndoil.org/bakken-grow/>.

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Polytechnic education provides solutions to workforce challenges



BSC works closely with industry leaders to bridge the gaps in industry needs and ensure students are prepared with the skills they need, the first day on the job.

An ongoing employee shortage has left many employers in the energy industry without the qualified, trained workforce they need—a workforce with the skills to operate, maintain and repair the equipment that keeps industry going. This shortfall continues to create gaps in productivity and profit in North Dakota. However, a new polytechnic education

model in the state's capital city is proving to be the solution to the challenges industry is facing.

In November 2021, North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum signed Senate Bill 2345 granting Bismarck State College (BSC) \$38 million from the state's federal Rescue Plan coronavirus aid to advance BSC's mission as a polytechnic institution

and to develop a more qualified workforce for the state.

"We are extremely appreciative of the level of confidence and commitment we've received from the governor and our legislative leaders to advance the ND State Board of Higher Education's polytechnic mission at BSC," says Doug Jensen, BSC president. "North Dakota

Job Service North Dakota indicates that oil and gas roustabout is one of the fastest growing careers in the state with an increase of almost 1,000 jobs expected in 2020 to 2030.

has tremendous natural assets that support economic growth in our state. The decision to invest in our polytechnic mission aligns perfectly with the state's economic growth projects."

BSC works closely with industry leaders to bridge the gaps in industry needs and ensure students are prepared with the skills they need, the first day on the job. BSC Polytechnic Program Outreach Director Alicia Uhde says learning experiences at a polytechnic institution are purposeful, practical, and driven by workforce needs.

"As companies continue to advance, it is important to ensure that the workforce is prepared and ready to maintain, repair, operate, and troubleshoot equipment and new technologies," says Uhde.

A polytechnic education gives students more hands-on, applied learning opportunities through real-world experiences with labs, internships and cooperative community projects.

"The industry partners that we work with at Bismarck State College know the quality and the skills of the students completing the program," says Reynold Miller, associate professor in the BSC National Energy Center of Excellence.

Applied learning at a polytechnic institution is intense and highly technical, but it's also incredibly rewarding.

"The result is exceptional career preparation, job placement, and higher-wage earning. Our mission and polytechnic education model is all about connecting talent to opportunity," says Uhde.

One such example is a two-week training offered this spring at BSC to ready participants for entry-level positions in the oil and gas industry. Thanks to the American Rescue Plan Act funding through the North Dakota Department of Commerce, this training is offered free of charge and provides an opportunity for individuals to gain entry-level employment in an enticing oil and gas career that can lead to future career options within the ranks of service and energy companies.

Job Service North Dakota indicates that oil and gas roustabout is one of the fastest growing careers in the state with an increase of almost 1,000 jobs expected in 2020 to 2030. Paired with labor force exit openings and occupational transfer openings, this totals more than 4,600 open jobs in North Dakota.

"Our industry partners are telling us that

laborers, floor handlers and roustabouts are in high demand in the oil and gas industry, and BSC is able to provide this training and prepare a workforce for them," Uhde notes. "This hands-on, project-based learning that students engage in prepares them to support companies while earning a very good living for themselves."

In addition to this short-term training, BSC also offers other certificates and two- and four-year Energy degrees on campus and online that provide learners with opportunities to upskill in their field. Internships and externships within the programs give students meaningful connections with employers in industry.

"Education has to be more responsive to workforce needs and more responsive to the signals from the private sector," Burgum said. "This is a new pathway for higher education in North Dakota." ▀



BSC also offers other certificates and two- and four-year Energy degrees on campus and online that provide learners with opportunities to upskill in their field.



Vision West ND addresses positive and negative impacts of oil exploration



When Vision West ND conducted its most recent town hall meetings throughout western North Dakota to identify the top issues people were concerned about, lack of services for behavioral health rose to the top in every community. Now in its third year, the 2023 Behavioral Health Summit in Energy Country is emphasizing solutions to the problems.

Western North Dakota has been sustaining communities through agriculture and its thriving oil and gas industry since the 1950s. The latest oil boom brought new jobs, economic advancements, and population growth to the 19-county region served by Vision West ND.

The Vision West ND consortium was formed at the height of the oil boom in 2012. Members from all the energy-producing counties – coal, oil, and wind – came together to develop a collaborative plan for this rural region. The growth was too large for any one city or county to work on the challenges and strains posed by the boom – housing shortages, inadequate road systems, environmental and landowner concerns. Working together meant a stronger voice with the legislature and with the state and federal

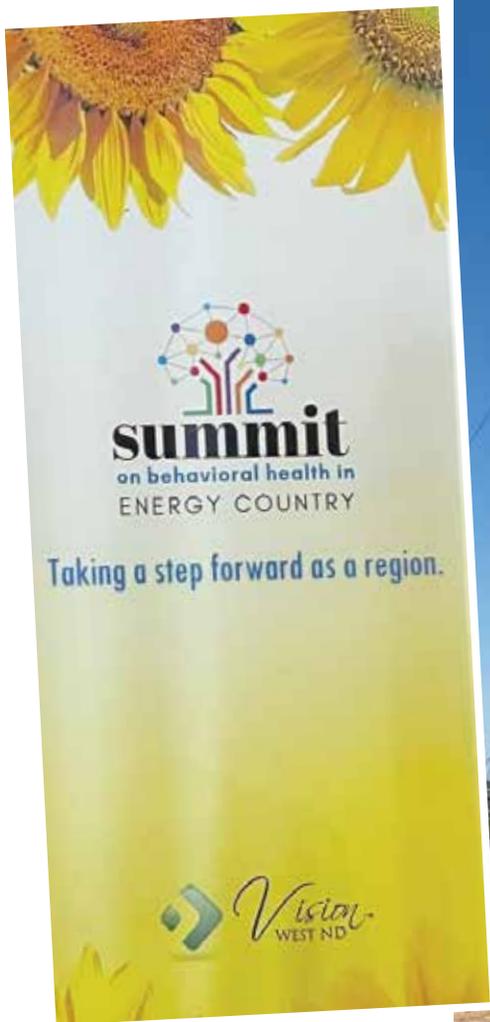
governments for much-needed resources to address the impacts of the oil boom.

One problem that was not initially realized by rural leaders was the impact the oil boom would have on the behavioral health of the communities in the region. When Vision West ND conducted its most recent town hall meetings throughout western North Dakota to identify the top issues people were concerned about, lack of services for behavioral health rose to the top in every community. The impacts of rapid growth, long work hours, lack of affordable housing, reduced workforce for non-oil businesses, and a lack of social services and support systems are now causes for great concern among all communities in the region.

The Vision West ND consortium's strength lies in its members' ability to collaborate,

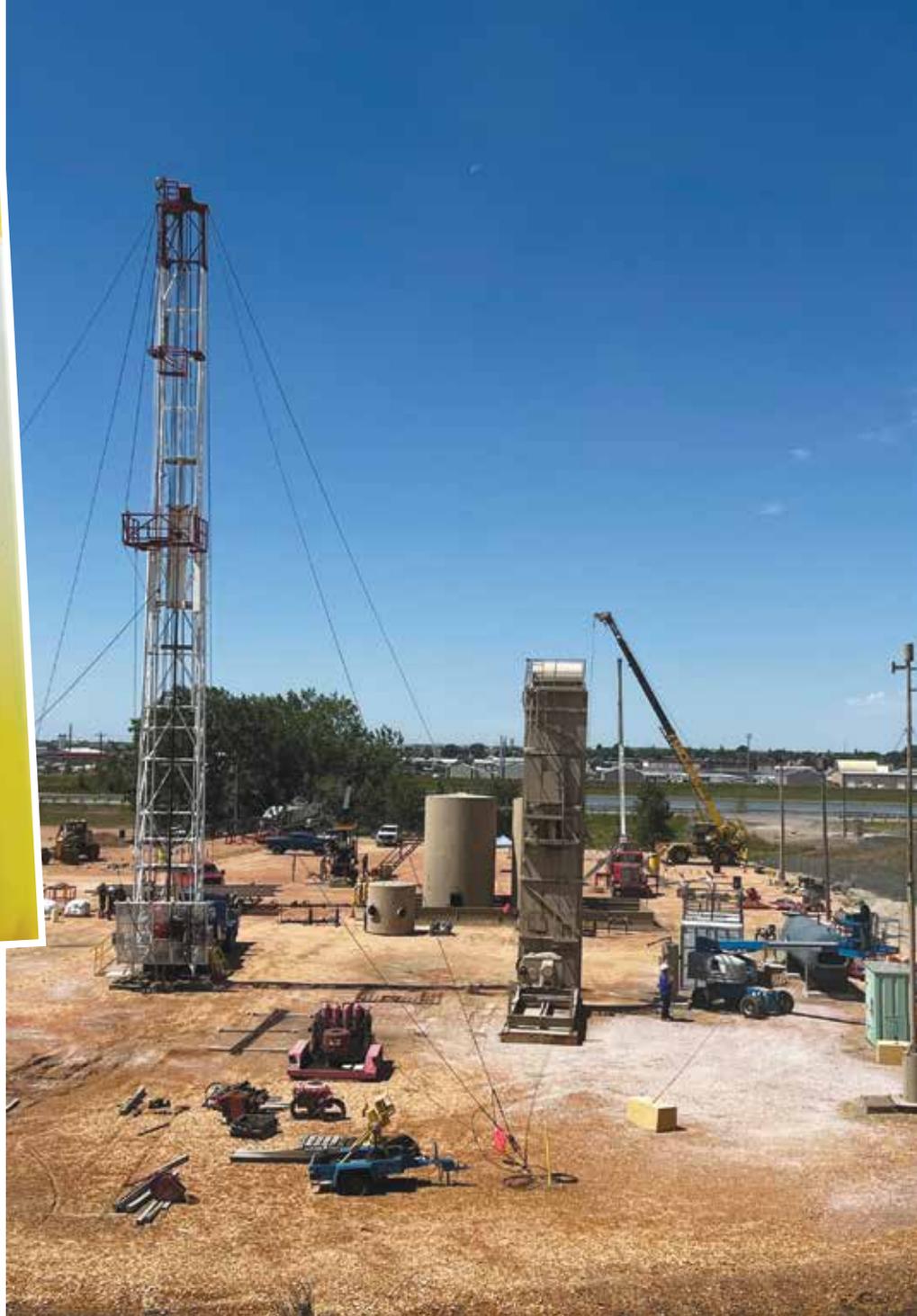
network, and take steps to provide support and resources for those who are in need. The first approach to working on behavioral health was to hold an educational summit that identified the extent of the issues surrounding mental health and addiction. Now in its third year, the 2023 Behavioral Health Summit in Energy Country is emphasizing solutions to the problems.

Access to mental health services is a priority throughout the region and the members of Vision West ND work behind the scenes to bring attention to the issues. Today, community health clinics and rural hospitals have expanded their services to provide more counseling, therapy, and support groups. Addiction counseling has been available for years, but treatment facilities have been almost nonexistent until very recently.



One facility is now up and running and one more will be opened this summer. Education and awareness campaigns are striving to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health and substance abuse.

Overall, the behavioral health impacts of the oil industry in western North Dakota are complex and multifaceted. The economic benefits of the industry have brought prosperity and improved quality of life for many, yet for many others it has added to depression, anxiety, and stress. Vision West ND's mission is to improve the quality of life for all residents in western North Dakota. And while community sustainability remains at the top of western North Dakota's priorities, Vision West ND will continue to address behavioral health education through collaboration, networking, and education. ►



Education and awareness campaigns are striving to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health and substance abuse.

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Workforce challenges inspire opportunities to innovate



By Anna Nelson, President of the Williston Area Chamber of Commerce

Workforce shortages. Workforce issues. Workforce struggles. These phrases have plagued the nation's economy for several years now, and the oil and gas industry is no exception. Companies once praised for creating numerous, high-paying jobs are now forced to operate below normal capacity due to the inability to attract and retain the necessary workforce. The result is less drilling, less fracking, and fewer barrels per day produced than operationally possible in the Bakken.

The frustration is real, and the effects far-reaching. As North Dakota is among the top three oil-production states in the nation, the Bakken's impact stretches nationally and even globally.

A study published in March 2021 by North Dakota State University

researchers, Dean Bangsund and Nancy Hodur, outlined the economic contributions of the industry in 2019 and their impacts on the state¹. Not only did that highlight the number of jobs (59,100), wages (\$4.5 billion), total gross business volume (\$40.2 billion), and tax revenue (\$22 billion from 2008-2022) that oil and gas provided North Dakota, but it also included a statement from Governor Doug Burgum that the industry impacts the "country's energy independence and national security,"² a sentiment echoed by the state's congressional delegation on Capitol Hill.

Also acknowledged in that report were the hardships presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent economic fallout that took a toll on the industry. That said, it was also stated that those

hardships spurred innovations that led to increased efficiencies in exploration and production that, in turn, led to a rapid rebound.

As the industry now faces the workforce issues head-on, it is once again finding innovative ways to fill those gaps and, once again, increase efficiencies. One such initiative by the North Dakota Petroleum Council (NDPC), Bakken GROW** (Global Recruitment of Oilfield Workers)³ works to tackle the issue from a humanitarian angle. The NDPC, utilizing the expertise of former Lt. Governor Brent Sanford who is leading the charge, has partnered with Uniting for Ukraine (U4U)⁴ to bring Ukrainian citizens who are seeking asylum to the Bakken where they can get matched with a job in the oilfield.



Announced in early Q2 of 2023, the NDPC hit the ground running to find community liaisons in four hub cities – Dickinson, Minot, Watford City, and Williston – who will then help secure sponsors, interpreters, a welcome committee, and spread the word among employers. The Ukrainian recruits will be fully vetted before getting matched with a sponsor, ensuring high levels of both ability and security as they are welcomed into their new communities.

• Community Liaisons (as of April 2023):

- Dickinson – Dickinson Area Chamber of Commerce, Executive Director Carter Fong, carter@dickinsonchamber.org
- Minot – Minot Area Chamber EDC, President | CEO Brekka Kramer, brekka@minotchamberedc.com; Workforce Development Specialist Keli Rosselli-Sullivan, keli@minotchamberedc.com
- Watford City – McKenzie County, Economic Development Director Daniel Stenberg, dstenberg@co.mckenzie.nd.us
- Williston – Williston Area Chamber of Commerce, President Anna Nelson, anna@willistonchamber.com

***You can read more about this on page 16 of this issue.*

Along with efforts to fill jobs now, there is also a growing push to develop future

workers, whether that is immediate up- or re-skilling or preparing the next generation. To the former point, the American Petroleum Institute just released the SkillsReady by API program⁵ that saw its first graduates enter the workforce in January 2023.

At the local level, students can enroll in the Petroleum Technology & Automation⁶ program at Williston State College, while the institution's workforce training arm, TrainND-Northwest⁷, boasts robust programming⁸ that aims to train current and potential employees in both operational and safety aspects to ensure that they are field-ready.

There is also a heightened emphasis on high school and middle school students, with the CTE (Career & Technical Education) center coming soon to Williston High School; ever-expanding dual credit opportunities with the NDUS higher education institutions, including Williston State College; job shadowing opportunities within the industry; and the advent of the T4 (Tools Trades Torque Tech) Summit⁹, just to name a few.

Whether the industry is "recruiting from within" or bringing new people to North Dakota, the Williston Area Chamber of Commerce (WACC) stands excited and ready to help. One program that WACC is preparing to roll out is the Relocation Concierge Service¹⁰ which offers a live, personalized tour and a first friend in

Williston for anyone looking to move here.

The chamber is proud of the community it serves and looks forward to fostering connection, engagement, growth, and leadership.

For more information:

Web: willistonchamber.com Phone: 701-577-6000 Em: wchamber@willistonchamber.com

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McKenzie County prepares for future opportunities



Above: The Maah Daah Hey Trail provides a great opportunity to get outdoors.

Left: Fox Hills Golf Course is known for having one of the best layouts in the region.



Three large-scale construction projects are underway in McKenzie County, including the Wolf Pup II Daycare, the Bakken Area Skills Center, and the McKenzie County Ag Expo.

The first project to be ready for the public will be the McKenzie County Ag Expo, which kicks off with the county fair on June 15-17, 2023. The Ag Expo is a new 112,000-square-foot facility

including indoor expo space and exhibit halls, an outdoor arena with covered grandstands, extensive parking, and RV spots. Its campus includes 212 acres off of the Highway 85 bypass along the southwest border of Watford City. The Bakken Area Skills Center saw vertical construction begin at the first of this year, and is projected to be completed by the beginning of 2024. The Skills Center will host hands-on technical training for both high school and post-high school learners. Currently, temporary units are being placed for the Wolf Pup II Daycare to be used for childcare as the permanent facility is constructed. When completed in mid-2024, the new facility will expand the childcare capacity of the area by another approximately 180 children.



Thousands come out each August for Watford City's Ribfest.

We are anticipating the impact that value-added energy projects will have on our county and region, such as the multi-billion-dollar Cerilon gas-to-liquids plant near Trenton that is currently in the planning stages. In addition to the jobs that the facility will bring, the value added to the raw energy that is being produced in our area will circulate more funds locally rather than having all of our raw products shipped off to other regions. Area school enrollments continue to climb throughout the county. For this past fall's school year, K-12 public school enrollments countywide increased from 2,310 in 2021 to 2,590 in 2022. US Highway 85 will continue its expansion to four lanes, with construction starting this year on the 10-mile stretch southward between Watford City and the Little Missouri River.

Quality of life and cultural opportunities continue to be top-of-mind for workforce development and attraction. McKenzie Health continues to expand its healthcare options with the recent addition of Labor and Delivery Services. The McKenzie County Heritage Park is making its final touches on its new 10,000-square-foot building that greatly expands its exhibit and meeting space. The Pioneer Museum that has been located in the Long X Visitors Center for the past two decades has contributed all of its history and petroleum exhibits to the Heritage Park to allow for a more streamlined visitor experience. The space that the Pioneer Museum had in the Long X Visitors Center will be occupied by a new Long X Arts Foundation Gallery and art classroom space, as well as offices for economic development and community promotions and attractions. A few of the annual events that newcomers and old-timers in the community look forward to each year include Arnegard's Fourth of July celebration, Watford City's Ribfest on the second Friday in August, and Alexander's Old Settlers Day over Labor Day weekend in September.

In the mood for something outdoors this summer? Check out Fox Hills' 18-hole golf course, take a hike in the North Unit of Theodore Roosevelt National Park, get your bike out on the 150-mile Maah Daah Hey Trail, or spend some time at Lake Sakakewea at Tobacco Gardens Resort.

There's always something happening in McKenzie County. ▶



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