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FALL 2022

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## Pushing back on the Biden administration's regulatory onslaught

Access to affordable and reliable energy is not only essential to our economy and quality of life, but it is a national security issue. Just a few years ago, our country became the world's largest oil and gas producer, as well as a net exporter of energy. As a result, consumers benefitted from historically-low energy prices. North Dakota's energy producers played a vital role in ensuring our country reached this important milestone. Rather than build upon this success, President Biden hit the brakes on domestic energy production and brought a regulatory onslaught against our oil and gas producers. In response, we are working to push back on this harmful approach and empower U.S. energy producers to restore our nation's energy security.

It started with the Biden administration's moratorium on new energy leases, which closed off access to our abundant taxpayer-owned energy reserves. Even when forced to hold lease sales by the courts, the administration severely curtailed the acres available, increased royalty rates, which get passed on to consumers, and has relied on litigation from their environmentalist allies to hold up the permits needed for energy development.

At the same time, President Biden continues to restrict our ability to move more oil and gas across the country by blocking pipelines, like Keystone XL. As energy prices have climbed, the administration and Congressional Democrats have doubled down on this approach, imposing costly taxes, like the new tax on natural gas, and Green New Deal policies that will make it harder and more costly to produce energy here at home, leading to even higher inflation.

Instead, we need President Biden to take the handcuffs off our energy producers. That's exactly what we are working to accomplish through legislation like my American Energy Independence

from Russia Act, which would take immediate action to increase U.S. energy production, including:

- Prohibiting any presidential moratoria on new energy leases.
- Restarting new oil and gas leasing by requiring the U.S. Department of the Interior to hold a minimum of four lease sales in each state with land available.
- Prohibiting drawdowns of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve until the Interior Secretary issues a plan to increase oil and gas production on federal lands and waters.
- Authorizing the construction and operation of the Keystone XL pipeline.
- Removing regulatory hurdles to increase liquefied natural gas exports.

At the same time, we are working to streamline the approval process for much-needed energy infrastructure, like pipelines, and reduce duplicative federal regulations for drilling permits. Specifically, my Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Mineral Spacing Act would eliminate the requirement for a BLM permit when the federal government is a minority mineral rights holder and has no surface rights. Doing so would significantly reduce the regulatory burden on energy producers and enable private mineral holders to exercise their property rights, while maintaining oversight under existing state-permitting authorities.

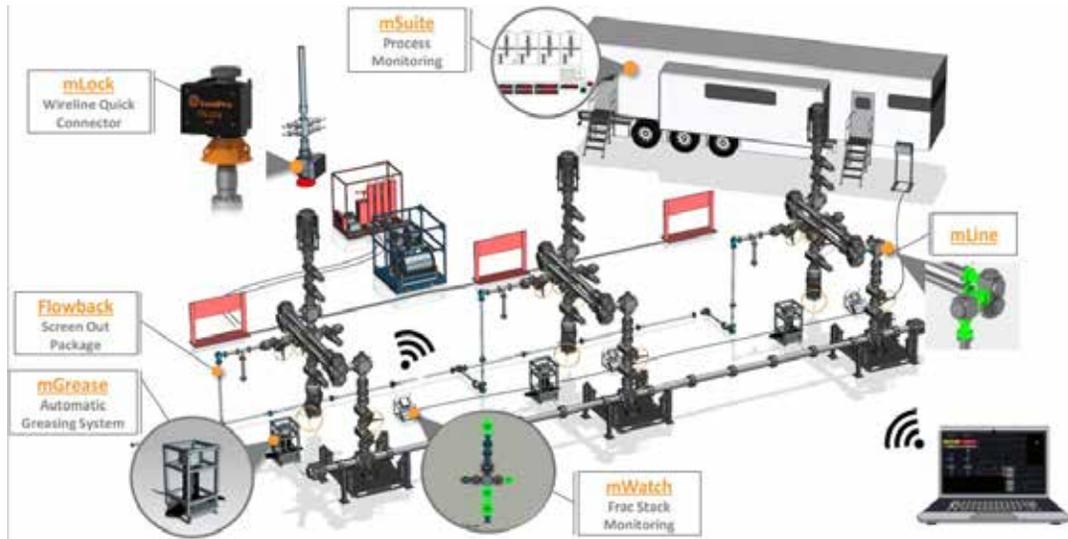
Our efforts are about supporting the success of American energy producers, which is essential to a stronger economy and a more secure nation. Every barrel of oil we produce here at home reduces our reliance on adversaries, like Russia, Iran, or Venezuela, while helping to bring down inflation for American families and businesses. That's the right approach for our country, and we continue to fight for policies like this every day. ▀

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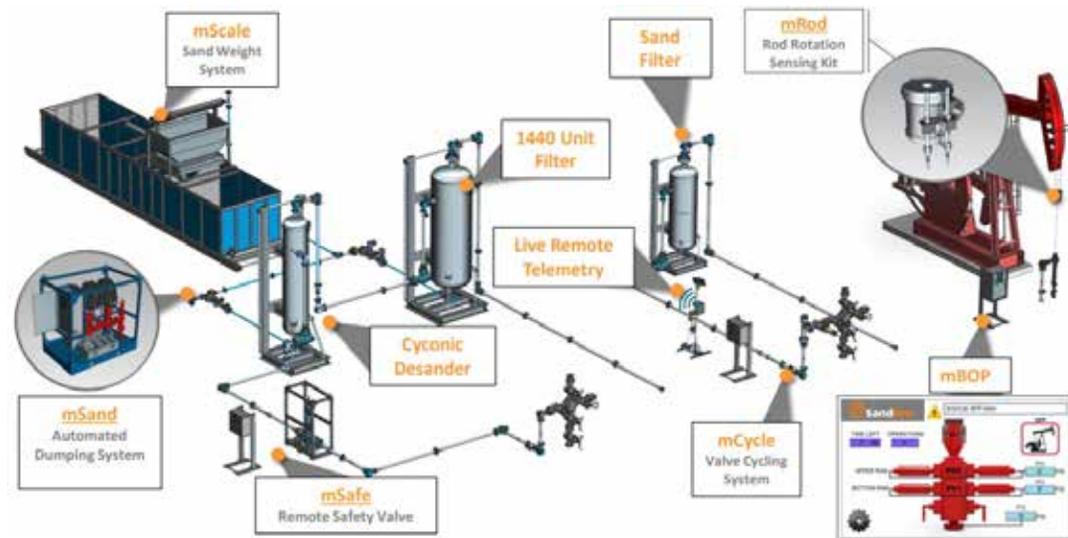


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# MISO warns of growing electric reliability gap

## *North Dakota doing its part to prevent outages*

The loss of baseload electric generation from coal plants that have retired or will retire soon is creating a widening gap between reliable power sources and expected peak demand on regional grids.

The North Dakota Public Service Commission recently met with officials from MISO (Midcontinent Independent System Operator), which delivers power to parts of North Dakota and 14 other states and provinces. The discussion centered around what MISO calls "resource adequacy."

Brian Tulloh, executive director of external affairs for MISO, said the pace of coal plant retirements has increased in recent years. He said the coal industry, as well as natural-gas fired generators, have found it difficult to attract capital due to the ESG movement (environmental, social and governance), which discourages investment in fossil fuels in favor of "sustainable resources." Tulloh noted that many of the plants are also aging and may not be repaired if breakdowns occur that would cost millions of dollars to fix.

Gigawatts lost to retirement are being replaced with a roughly equal amount of gigawatts of wind and solar generation. But the problem, Tulloh pointed out, is that while coal plants are accredited at 90 percent of their nameplate capacity, wind is only accredited at 16 percent and solar at 35 percent, producing a shortfall in dispatchable generation.

"We are adding capacity on an installed basis, but we're actually going down in an accredited capacity basis, so that's there's a gap there," Tulloh said. "There's a gap that we need to fill because we don't have any projections of demand fundamentally going down."

Tulloh said MISO officials have increasingly been sounding the alarm about the growing threat to reliability, which he said has actually been met with criticism by environmental groups that want to promote a "clean energy" future.

"We started signaling a bit more aggressively, pointedly, around some concerns that we have about the 'transition' and risks that we see if the

transition isn't managed carefully and thoughtfully," Tulloh said. "We're taking a lot of criticism actually, for doing that. Some call it alarmist, but we think it's prudent to go down this path."

The growing gap between available capacity and electric demand will ultimately lead to rolling blackouts if corrective action isn't taken. PSC chair Julie Fedorchak, who testified before a U.S. senate committee in July about the importance of maintaining the reliability of the electric grid, said North Dakota utilities have been responsible about maintaining adequate generating capacity, and should not be subjected to outages because other states have not done their part.

"I think it's especially unacceptable when you're in a state where you believe and have evidence that the state is trying to protect and invest in the kind of resources that are available," Fedorchak said. "So, if you're paying for that, it's even harder to tolerate outages caused by unavailable generation, so North Dakota is going to be pretty stubborn in advocating for policies that recognize our differences and don't sweep us in with everybody else."

Fedorchak said those who are pushing "clean energy" need to be patient, and recognize that renewables like wind and solar are not capable of replacing baseload coal plants and other thermal generation sources. ▀

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"We are adding capacity on an installed basis, but we're actually going down in an accredited capacity basis, so that's there's a gap there," Tulloh said.

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# The best solutions for energy security are found in North Dakota

By Cole Ramsey

As European Union leaders stare down the possibility of a “full stop” to their economy, America’s oil and natural gas companies are ready with proven solutions to boost supply and address energy inflation – solutions found in the 44 operating rigs of North Dakota.

The facts are clear: the success of the Bakken oil producing region has made North Dakota an energy powerhouse. Though small in population, North Dakota is one of the main pillars of America’s shale revolution and emergence as the world’s top producer of oil and natural gas. In 2021, North Dakota was the third largest producer of crude oil in the United States.

North Dakota’s oil and natural gas production generates more the \$40 billion in total economic impact annually and has created 59,100 jobs. The energy sector drives the pace of economic activity in every other industry in the state, from agriculture to recreation to professional services to health care. And with commonsense policies from leaders in Washington, DC, North Dakota will continue flourishing as an energy leader well into the future, meeting the demands of a growing world population.

In June of this year, my organization, the American Petroleum Institute (API) unveiled the “10-in-’22” Plan to strengthen U.S.

energy leadership and unleash investment. These 10 policy proposals would speed up the approval of oil and natural gas projects and accelerate construction of the critical infrastructure and pipelines needed to move Bakken oil and gas.

The 10-in-’22 would also lift development restrictions on federal lands and waters, dismantle supply chain bottlenecks, and block overly burdensome climate disclosure proposals advanced by the Biden administration so that North Dakota companies can secure the levels of investment and capital they need to address the current global energy crisis.

In testimony before the Energy Subcommittee of the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy & Natural Resources in July, North Dakota Petroleum Council President Ron Ness said: “If we are serious about ramping up production, we need to look at the layers of regulations that operators must work through to start producing, [which] can sometimes take years.” Ness urged the committee to consider the reforms outlined in the 10-in-’22 plan and also encouraged the easing of regulatory hurdles specific to North Dakota producers that cause a counterproductive jumble of federal and private mineral interests.

In August, the North Dakota Petroleum Council joined API and more than 50 other industry trade groups to oppose the



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punitive tax increases contained in the Inflation Reduction Act. North Dakota producers understand that, during times of high demand and tight supply, they need a tax and regulatory structure that incentivizes growth and allows the development of additional supplies needed to achieve energy security at home and abroad.

The regulatory and permitting reforms outlined in the 10-in-'22 plan are desperately needed and are essential in effectively delivering affordable, reliable energy to consumers during a yawning imbalance between global energy demand and global energy supply.

North Dakota has led the way in energy production while protecting the environment. The state is well-positioned to do much more. The policies, action items, and solutions detailed in the 10-in-'22 plan will give the state's energy producers the tools to supply more American-made oil and natural gas to consumers here at home and our allies abroad – not to mention generate good jobs, increased tax revenues, and economic development. With the right approach, North Dakota can continue building on previous gains, safeguard America's energy future, and stimulate long-term economic growth.

*Cole Ramsey is vice president of Upstream Policy at the American Petroleum Institute in Washington, DC. ▶*



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# Reconciliation legislation carries new costs for Bakken producers

By Kenny Stein

In August, President Biden signed the Democratic Party's reconciliation legislation into law. Though designated the "Inflation Reduction Act" for PR purposes, the legislation does nothing to address inflation, rather the legislation contains a host of healthcare, corporate tax and climate change spending provisions. Because of the rules of the reconciliation process, the legislation was required to be limited to just provisions which dealt with tax and spending; larger policy changes were disallowed or dropped during the legislative process. Thus the energy provisions of the package were largely limited to lavishing subsidies and tax credits on various industries or technologies. However, a significant punitive energy tax element did make the final deal: a new tax on methane emissions from oil and gas production and distribution. While less damaging than earlier iterations of the tax, this provision is likely to impact the Bakken more heavily than other basins.

The methane tax will levy a \$900 tax per metric ton of methane in 2024, rising to \$1,500 per ton by 2026. The fee will be applied to emissions above a certain percentage threshold depending on the type of facility. Importantly, the tax also only applies to facilities that emit more than 25,000 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent per year. This threshold is significantly higher than for the version of this tax that was included in the House-passed version of the reconciliation legislation. This means that many smaller producers will be shielded from some of the direct

impacts of the tax. Because the Bakken continues to have higher rates of venting and flaring thanks to longer distances and less natural gas collection infrastructure, the impacts of the tax could be felt more heavily in the basin than others.

In addition to the 25,000-ton emission threshold, there is another partial relief valve built into the tax. Compliance with the proposed methane regulations from the EPA would allow a facility to avoid this new tax. However, the regulatory authority from those new EPA methane regulations is in question and will be subject to litigation. This means that this avenue for tax relief may not be available when the tax goes into effect in 2024, and potentially even longer.

There are still a lot of unknowns regarding this new tax on methane. The tax will likely be targeted for repeal by a future Republican-controlled congress. Many Democratic members of congress have expressed dissatisfaction with some of the thresholds and exemptions, so an expansion of the tax under a future Democratic-controlled congress is also a strong possibility. How the EPA measures methane emissions could also change over time, which would affect the entities covered by the tax.

Ultimately, this new methane tax is a tax on the whole energy system. It will raise the cost of natural gas and oil, either through the direct cost of the tax or the indirect compliance cost of installing the infrastructure to monitor and capture the gas. The uncertainties involved in the implementation and future application of the tax also will increase costs. This raising of the cost of energy, which has been one of the largest drivers of inflation, is one of the more obvious elements undermining the inflation reduction claims associated with this legislation.

The tax is a destabilizing mistake that will need to be adjusted or corrected by a future congress. In the meantime, though, producers will have find a way to grapple with the cost and uncertainty.

*Kenny Stein is the policy director for the Institute for Energy Research. ▀*



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# Public-funded North Dakota refinery continues to make strides



The Davis Refinery is a 49,500 bpd full-conversion crude refinery being constructed by Meridian Energy Group on a 715-acre parcel of land just west of Belfield and just east of the Fryburg crude-by-rail terminal. Permitting of Davis began in 2015 – Billings County awarded the Use Permit in July 2016, and the North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality awarded the air quality permit in June 2018. Meridian performed the bulk of the earthwork on the property in 2018, and additional site work is being performed this summer, including improvements to the storm runoff pond and other drainage structures. Full foundation work will not commence until summer of 2023.

The company has faced substantial challenges on Davis, including four major litigation efforts, all of which were decided in favor of Meridian, two of them going to the North Dakota Supreme Court. Additional challenges faced by Meridian on this project include COVID's impact on the capital markets and the chilling effect of the Biden administration's war on fossil fuels. Despite these challenges, Meridian has continued work on Davis. Davis completed earthwork and site preparations beginning in 2018, and the company formally began design and construction of Davis last year under an agreement with a major international energy design-construction firm.

The Davis Refinery will employ approximately 500 during construction and up to 200 during operation. Research indicates that the refinery will give rise to a 12:1 increase in total employment in the area, creating over 2,000 total jobs. Davis will nearly triple the tax base of Billings County.

Davis will be the first full conversion refinery built in the U.S. since the 1970s. Davis will be the cleanest refinery on the planet when completed, with air emissions of less than one-eighth of the U.S. average, and greenhouse gas emissions of less than 40 percent of U.S. average. Davis will utilize wastewater from the City of Dickinson in its process.

Davis will use Bakken crude oil brought down from Johnson's Corner by pipeline and will sell its products locally and regionally under a 10-year offtake agreement covering 100 percent of its products. Davis will also use 2,000 barrels per day of North Dakota vegetable oil in its process, creating a market for, and in-state process of, North Dakota agricultural products, as well as North Dakota crude oil.

Despite the recent public statements by Chevron's CEO, there will be several new refineries in the United States. Meridian has developed the intellectual property that will enable it to design, permit, and build additional domestic refineries, including projects in the planning and pre-permit design stages in West Texas and near Cushing, Oklahoma.

Meridian has invested over \$50 million to date in the Davis project, and a major portion of that funding has come from residents of North Dakota. Meridian has entered into an engagement agreement with a major Wall Street investment banking firm to provide funding for the Davis project. Meridian is also continuing to capitalize the parent company to accelerate the development of additional badly needed refinery projects.

In summary, Meridian's Davis Refinery will be an important agent of change in the U.S. refinery industry and will meet the needs of the nation while providing important benefits to North Dakota. Meridian will also take the Davis model – developed in North Dakota – and use it to create other clean-technology refineries using crude oil from other shale-oil basins across the country.

As a disruptive development-stage firm in an industry dominated by enormously rich integrated firms, Meridian never did expect active political or industry support, and has quietly gone about its business without seeking endorsements. ▀



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## North Dakota Tribal College System announces statewide apprenticeship program in partnership with Hess Corporation, Halliburton and Nabors Industries

*Over the next four years, Hess will invest \$12 million to provide tuition assistance, stipends and other support for establishing apprenticeships in a variety of industries designed by each of the state's five tribal colleges based on the local job market and needs of their tribal communities. Photos courtesy of Feldner Creative.*

The North Dakota Tribal College System (NDTCS) announced on September 23, 2022 a new apprenticeship program developed in partnership with Hess Corporation to improve educational and employment opportunities for Native Americans across North Dakota.

Over the next four years, Hess will invest \$12 million to provide tuition assistance, stipends and other support for establishing apprenticeships in a variety

of industries designed by each of the state's five tribal colleges based on the local job market and needs of their tribal communities. Halliburton and Nabors Industries will each invest \$1 million in the new apprenticeship program.

"The partnership we are announcing today reflects the tireless efforts of everyone involved over the past 18 months to design a program that serves a traditional education mission while

concurrently responding to deeper community needs," said Cankdeska Cikana (Little Hoop) Community College President Dr. Cynthia Lindquist. "We are excited to develop new career and workforce opportunities for our young people and are very pleased to have the support from Hess, Nabors, Halliburton and the governor."

Following the "earn and learn" model of the apprenticeship program currently



in place at Lake Region State College, the new statewide program will provide tribal college students with on-the-job skills training through college work study, internships and apprenticeships as they progress toward completing a two-year degree or technical certification, with the possibility of earning a bachelor's or master's degree depending on the apprenticeship position and location. The new apprenticeship program is scheduled to begin in January 2023.

"Our company has a longstanding commitment to making a positive social impact on the communities where we operate, said John Hess, Hess CEO. "We are proud to support the North Dakota Tribal College System in developing a comprehensive program to provide students with education and employment opportunities that will lead to rewarding careers."

Speaking in the state capitol at a ceremony commemorating the announcement, Gov. Doug Burgum recognized the significance of the new program.



"Public-private partnerships can be transformative, and the program being launched today is another great example of our state's private-sector partners believing and investing in the future of North Dakota," Governor Burgum said. "With today's announcement, Hess, Nabors, and Halliburton are providing essential resources for our tribal colleges to invest in students in a way that can spark generational change and empower people, improve lives and inspire success."

Jeff Miller, Halliburton chairman, president, and CEO said, "As a company

with a long history of operations in North Dakota, we see this program as a fantastic way to develop and nurture skills necessary for the future productivity of the local economy, as well as for Halliburton. We are excited to support the NDTCS and this program."

Nabors senior vice-president and chief administrative officer, Jade Strong, added, "Nabors is committed to strengthening the communities that our employees call home. We are honored to support the NDTCS and advanced educational opportunities that can change lives and launch careers across North Dakota." ▀

# Community connection

## *Taking the energy industry from obscure to obtainable*

*By Anna Nelson, president of the Williston Area Chamber of Commerce*



The oil pumping from the earth is nearly as vital to humanity as the blood pumping through our veins. For those who live among the oil workers; drive past the pumpjacks and saltwater disposals; marvel at the structures and equipment used for fracking, drilling, and workovers; see familiar names of oilfield companies emblazoned on trucks at every stoplight; and ride the economic waves of the boom-and-bust cycle, the industry is a normal part of everyday life – even so, many do not realize the scope of the industry nor its broad impacts.

While I am no expert in the field, I am a resident and community leader in Williston. As such, I am quickly learning just how far-reaching the industry's effects are. How its companies are integral to our economy, how much its companies give, how its workers are the threads that make up the colorful tapestry of our community, and how its products extend far beyond the gasoline used to power our cars.

The recent societal focus on renewable energy sounds, to the average citizen, as though phasing out oil and gas and other fossil fuels to eventual obscurity is inevitable, without

questioning the feasibility. To those who think so, I would ask "Did you drive your car today? Did you walk on asphalt today? Do the jeans you are wearing have spandex in them? Is the couch you are sitting on made of nylon or acrylic fabric? Did you wash your hair with shampoo this morning? Did you use a plastic stirrer in your coffee this morning? Can you see clearly right now because you are wearing glasses or contact lenses?" If the answer is "yes" to any of these posed questions, this simple statement would follow, "then you used petroleum products today."

Not only are petroleum products much more diversified than many realize, so are oil and gas operations. Since the pumpjacks are the most recognizable indicator of the industry, production is often the only aspect associated with the general population's knowledge of its inner workings. That was exactly my thinking prior to moving to Williston – but that is far from the truth. There are companies that specialize in drilling, fracking, saltwater disposal, transportation, pipelines, and other midstream partners, chemicals for enhanced oil recovery and to prevent scale and corrosion, mineral rights specialists, consultants,

Not only are petroleum products much more diversified than many realize, so are oil and gas operations. Since the pumpjacks are the most recognizable indicator of the industry, production is often the only aspect associated with the general population's knowledge of its inner workings.

research experts, safety, raw materials to manufacture equipment – the list goes on.

We may know the names of these companies – but do we know what they do, how they work, and how what they do is relevant to us? Often, the answer is “no,” and that is where education must come in.

From the outside looking in, the industry is daunting and obscure. The challenge and opportunity is to bridge that gap, to make it more understandable and accessible. That is a challenge which we at the Williston Area Chamber of Commerce intend to meet. The goal is to create an energy committee that would open channels of communication between companies, with the chamber and with the public.

Many companies in the industry give so much back to the community. We want to create an intentional space so that the industry has an opportunity to engage, connect, and educate, further cementing their presence in and commitment to the community to which they mean so much – and will mean even more. ▶



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# North Dakota paving the way to be the next data center capital of the world

*Stanley R. Mickelsen Safeguard Complex is also known as the pyramid of North Dakota.*

Today, Ashburn, Virginia is known as the “Data Center Capital of the World”, but more than 1,500 miles west lies a state that is diligently working to be a global leader in several industries that may soon become the “Data Center Capital of the World 2.0”.

With an abundance of rich natural resources, existing infrastructure, favorable climate, an unmatched statewide fiber connection network, and a drive for innovation and business expansion, North Dakota is steadily paving its way to be the next global leader in data centers.

Geographically positioned over the Bakken formation, North Dakota is a top energy-producing state. Instead of exporting excess energy, North Dakota offers the use of existing energy for data centers. This allows businesses and investors to reduce losses from transportation and infrastructure needs.

Another key aspect is the “geological jackpot” that lies under Western

North Dakota which allows for the sequestration of CO<sub>2</sub>. This “jackpot” is the formation of a deep porous rock layer that can sequester CO<sub>2</sub> and overlying cap rock layers to permanently seal CO<sub>2</sub>, which can provide the power generation needed for data centers to achieve carbon neutrality.

North Dakota’s cooler climate is another optimal factor for data centers. The majority of energy consumption from data processors comes from heat. The local climate eliminates the need for energy-consuming cooling equipment, which allows equipment to be more efficient and last longer.

The state is also working hard to find synergistic partnerships for facilities to utilize heat exhausted from the data centers. The elimination of cooling equipment, paired with heat consuming partners, can help data centers move towards carbon neutrality.

Working simultaneously with what North Dakota offers through naturally existing

factors, the state also provides many incentives and advantages for businesses and investors.

“North Dakota is one of the lowest-cost states for operating a business,” said Josh Teigen, North Dakota Department of Commerce commissioner. “In addition to low operating costs for existing businesses, the state also offers a variety of programs, resources and expert assistance for those looking to expand or invest in future North Dakota businesses.”

Many companies have already begun to seize the bountiful opportunities from the data center movement in North Dakota. One of the most notable being the recent announcement of Bitzero Blockchain Inc. signing an agreement to purchase and redevelop the historic Stanley R. Mickelsen Safeguard Complex in Nekoma.

Bitzero’s Nekoma project will bring together three pillars of North Dakota’s economy: energy, agriculture and tourism. The project will be designed

to utilize waste heat from the data center that will be used in an on-site greenhouse. This will enable North Dakota to grow crops year-round to help feed the world. The historic nature of the site being a key Cold War structure will be shared with tourists visiting North Dakota.

In addition to the Nekoma complex, several other large projects are in progress, such as Atlas Power, Applied Block Chain, Sundog, and Core Scientific. Current and planned projects represent nearly \$3 billion of direct investment.

Commerce is committed to bringing North Dakota's data center movement to its highest potential and to reach it, the agency provides potential data center developers customized incentive packages that includes concierge level services by a talented team of professional business developers.

These packages feature specific project and company details to provide an accurate view of potential incentives in the form of grants, low interest loans, property, sales, and income tax reductions or waivers, as well as other varied incentives.

Learn more about the North Dakota Department of Commerce at [www.commerce.nd.gov](http://www.commerce.nd.gov). ▀



*Antelope Valley Station and Freedom Mine. Credit Antelope Valley Station.*



*Milton R. Young Station at night, near Center, North Dakota.*



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# Permitting reform stalls in congress

By Paige Lambermont

The Biden administration loves pipeline infrastructure, as long as it's not domestic. There's a stark divide between this administration's approach to pipelines within the United States, and those abroad, namely in Europe. On his first day in office, Biden signed an executive order revoking the Trump-era permit for the Keystone XL Pipeline. The order cited an Obama-era review claiming that the pipeline "would not serve the U.S. national interest."

But at a time when the price of energy is increasing both at home and abroad, wouldn't the Keystone XL and other pipelines be definitionally in the national interest?

In 2020, the Atlantic Coast Pipeline was canceled by the developers, after costly legal challenges throughout the permitting and construction process took costs from \$4.5 billion to \$8 billion.

The Trump administration moved to reform NEPA through a rulemaking that would have in part ameliorated some difficulties along the permitting process. The rule was challenged, and

when Biden took office, the change was canceled.

Meanwhile, while this administration demonized pipelines at home, in Europe it waived sanctions on the Russian Nord Stream 2 pipeline, with Secretary of State Blinken claiming that was "in the U.S. national interest." By this administration's interpretation, maintaining natural gas flows to Germany and elsewhere in Europe is somehow more in our national interest than energy transportation at home.

What's needed is a reform to permitting that would improve the process for pipelines and other energy infrastructure in the U.S. Although there is appetite in the Senate right now for so-called 'permitting reform', it is unlikely that much will come of it. The bill put forward by West Virginia Republican Senator Shelley Moore, the Capito bill, would among its reforms codify the Trump-era NEPA reform rulemaking into law. But with a Democratic majority in the Senate and the 60-vote threshold necessary for passage, this bill doesn't have serious prospects. West Virginia

Democratic Senator Joe Manchin has also proposed a permitting reform bill, but this one contains far less actual permitting reform, mainly focusing on the approval of the Mountain Valley pipeline to West Virginia. Also, because Manchin wrote the bill without much input from either his Democratic colleagues or the Republicans whose votes he is trying to win, it will be a difficult climb for him to be able to reach the necessary threshold for passage either. With the time constraints and pressure of preventing a government shutdown, it may lead to passage of a continuing resolution that does permitting reform in name only.

This leaves substantive permitting reform in a place where it is simultaneously the topic of the moment, and unlikely to receive actual legislative action. Unfortunately, this could mean that lawmakers will have something to point to on permitting reform without having fixed much of anything, leaving infrastructure approvals even worse off than they were before.

*Paige Lambermont is a policy analyst at the Institute for Energy Research. In her role, she writes about the impacts of government policy on energy markets. She has a bachelor's degree in political science from American University and is from Butler, Pennsylvania. ►*

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# Building a hydrogen hub on the Prairies

By Erin Matthews and the Saskatchewan Research Council (SRC)

Saskatchewan is poised to be a leader in Canada's energy transition.

The province's established oil and gas industry is crucial for diversifying the energy sector and providing solutions that work for the economy and the environment. With over 30 years of industry knowledge and expertise, the Saskatchewan Research Council (SRC) is supporting the province as it turns its attention towards hydrogen.

International interest in hydrogen has grown over the last couple of years. Countries are exploring the role hydrogen can play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and helping achieve net-zero targets.

Hydrogen can be combusted and used similarly to natural gas, diesel or

gasoline, for example in heating and transportation applications. Hydrogen can also be used in a fuel cell to produce electricity. Fuel cell applications are more efficient, but the ability to use hydrogen in internal combustion engines makes it a versatile transition fuel for heavy-duty transportation.

In Canada and in Saskatchewan, hydrogen is currently produced from natural gas, but it can also be made from electrolysis or water splitting, which produces hydrogen from water. Its versatility in both production and end-use applications makes it an attractive fuel alternative.

"The multiple production pathways for hydrogen make it is a more versatile option for energy transition," says Petro Nakutnyy, director of enhanced oil

recovery and in-situ processes at SRC.

"In some regions of the world where gas supplies are prevalent, hydrogen can be produced from natural gas and combined with carbon capture, which allows us to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions significantly right away."

SRC has over 30 years of experience in alternative fuel research. In 2004, SRC produced the first Dual-Fuel™ diesel-hydrogen vehicle. This was followed by the first hydrogen-gasoline vehicle in 2005. At its height, the project featured a fleet of hydrogen hybrid vehicles. In 2010, a hydrogen fuelling station was established to support these vehicles.

In recent years, the cost of producing, storing and working with hydrogen has come down and is expected to further decrease over the next decade.

"We can see how hydrogen use could be economical on its own merits, especially when you take into account the environmental benefits of converting some applications to hydrogen," says Nakutnyy.

For producers and users, hydrogen poses some challenges, such as storage. Hydrogen hubs could play an important role in solving these challenges, and collaboration is key to their development.

SRC is working closely with experts from the Transition Accelerator and the University of Regina, with support from the Ministry of Energy and Resources and industry partners—including Federated Co-operatives Limited and Whitecap

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Resources—to assess the feasibility of a hydrogen hub and synergies with carbon capture, utilization and storage (CCUS) infrastructure in the Regina-Moose Jaw industrial corridor.

A hydrogen/CCUS hub could help Saskatchewan establish an entire commercial-scale hydrogen supply and demand chain.

Hydrogen can address many of Saskatchewan's needs while using its established infrastructure and expertise to help grow a new hydrogen economy in the province.

"We can use the industries that we have and retool some of it to produce hydrogen, therefore reducing emissions and creating an environment that would then allow further growth of hydrogen use," says Nakutnyy.

Read the full article on SRC's blog, [src.sk.ca/blog](http://src.sk.ca/blog). ▶



Image courtesy of SRC.



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# The good news for oil and gas inside the Inflation Reduction Act

By Sarp Ozkan

The Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 has been getting a lot of attention lately. Despite its non-descript title, the new act will have a major impact on energy.

The investment of nearly \$370 billion in energy security and climate change programs over the next decade is the largest of its kind. It will aim to incentivize further renewable energy development, increase electric vehicle (EV) adoption, encourage energy efficiency, and even target emissions from oil and gas infrastructure and the agricultural sector.

The act restores tax credits for solar and wind projects to their full rates and ensures they stay in effect at those levels for at least another decade. In addition, the act introduces tax incentives for standalone storage and hydrogen projects, as well as expanding and extending 45Q carbon capture credits.

Most of the benefits of this plan come

from tax breaks intended to reduce the cost of renewable energy without burdening the cost of traditional energy. Even if you're not invested in renewable energy, it's worth paying attention especially as we look at an integrated energy future and comparisons across all forms of energy.

As an example, the figure below shows how the BTAX single well economics across major oil and gas producing basins compare to the ATAX project economics of solar and wind projects across different ISOs. It is worth noting that the economics of oil and gas are superior even at lower price levels (\$60/bbl & \$3.50/MMBtu) than we see today and higher power prices (\$60/MWh) than are realized by almost all these projects.

Although these figures reflect economics of projects at the pre-act tax credit levels, it is clear to see that even with increased

tax incentives, the competitiveness of these projects do not measure up to the best opportunities in oil and gas. The project finance structure of many of these projects means that a lot of risk is shed through EPC and O&M contracts (for construction and operational risk) and PPAs (for price risk). We consistently see solar and wind projects in a low, but tight range in terms of their returns. Oil and gas companies' cost of capital is too high to target mid-10 percent IRRs. Even with the higher tax credits afforded to these technologies through the new act, all but the majors will likely continue to engage with this space through PPAs rather than partnerships, JVs or direct ownership.

The act could also open up new, often overlooked opportunities for oil and gas. We may see some companies (from E&P & OFS to midstream & downstream) look at the prospects of participating in carbon capture and hydrogen markets. After all, expertise in these areas is already within their ranks. The extension of the 45Q for carbon capture and the new PTC for hydrogen will have similar positive impacts on investments in these technologies. Just to demonstrate, prior to the expansion of the 45Q, only 15 percent of hub emissions broke even below \$50/tonne. The increase to \$85/tonne more than doubles the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the money for potential abatement (Figure 5). Additionally, this increase will motivate broader CCUS adoption across most sectors (Figure 6).

Sure, the Inflation Reduction Act is

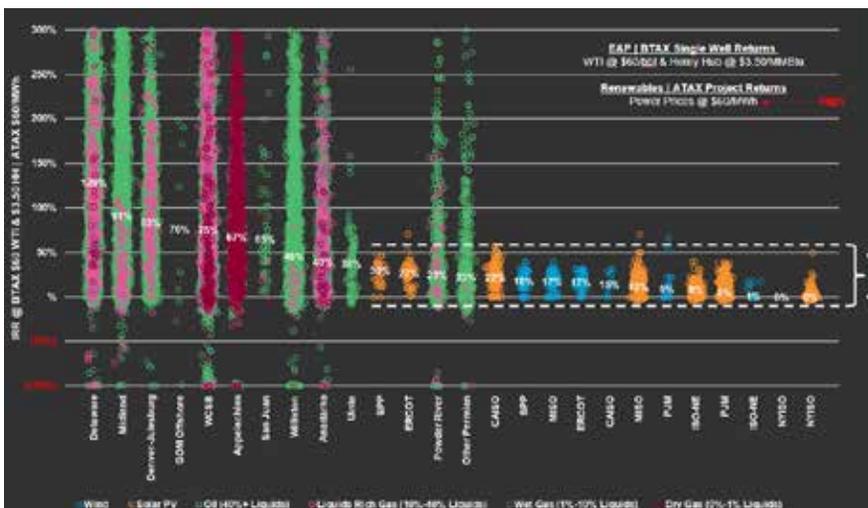


Figure 1 - Economic comparison of oil and gas versus solar & wind projects (pre-IRA).

certainly positive for the wind and solar industries. However, as good as these measures may look for those focused on renewables, they still don't solve some of the immediate structural problems such as the all too apparent supply chain issues, ongoing anti-dumping/circumvention-related concerns, location and security of rare earth minerals reserves and manufacturing, or the aging and frail power grid.

With minimal negative impact to oil and gas, the act also signals that fossil fuels will remain a part of America's energy future for years to come. And with the right ingenuity and some intelligent connections, it may even open up new, overlooked opportunities for oil and gas, and that is good news for the Bakken and its producers. Every company focused on the energy industry, from oil and gas to power and renewables has to be quick to respond to the energy transition we're seeing before us. The need for clear, actionable intelligence of the entire energy ecosystem, a single source of truth that brings all the data together, and the speed to be able to seize opportunities and mitigate risk has never been more important. Together, these intelligent connections will help create and discover previously unseen insights and opportunities, act fast, and deliver extraordinary outcomes to be ready for the future – no matter what it brings.

*Sarp Ozkan is vice president, commercial product for Enverus. He has more than 10 years of research and modeling experience in the upstream, downstream and power markets. Ozkan has been a trusted energy markets expert for the media and has led consulting projects around many M&A and strategy-related inquiries. He holds a Master of Science in Mineral and Energy Economics from the Colorado School of Mines, a Master of Science in Petroleum Economics and Management from the Institut Francais du Petrole (IFP School), and a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from the University of Chicago. ▶*

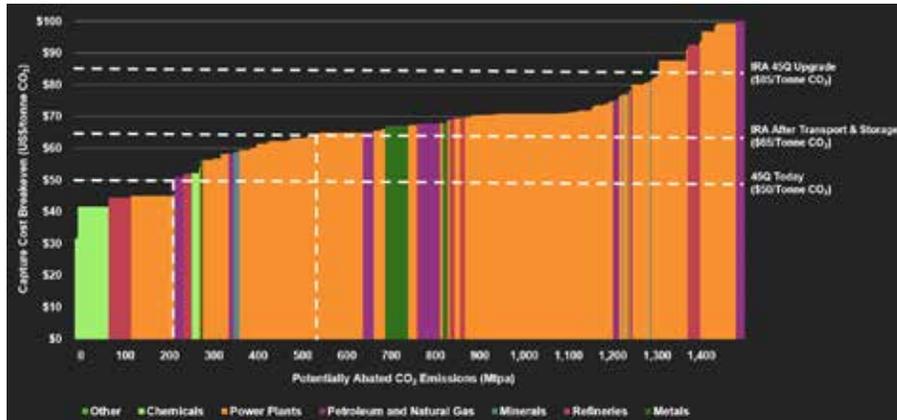


Figure 2 - CCUS: 2.5X more CO<sub>2</sub> abatement is in the money.

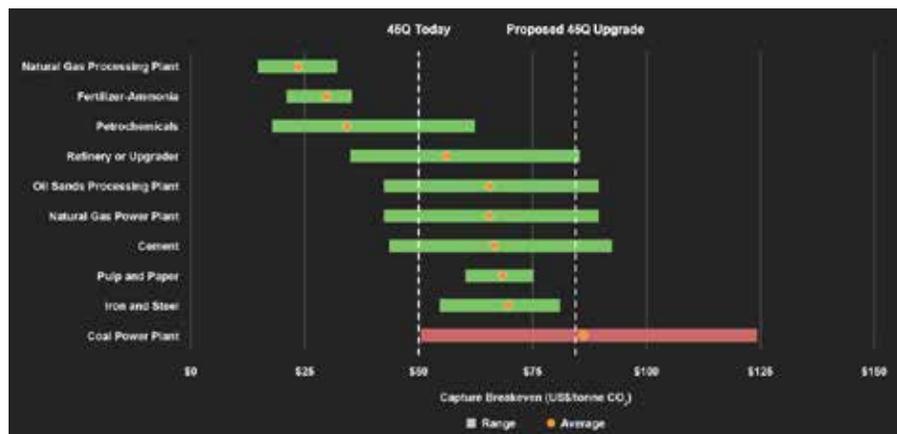


Figure 3 – CCUS expansion makes abatement economic for most sectors.



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# Keeping your pumps running

*The importance of power quality for your well site and how MTE helps you meet production requirements*

*By Gregg Eberhardt, product line manager, MTE Corporation*



*For decades, MTE has been a preferred choice in the oil and gas industry.*

## PRICE AND PRODUCTION RELATIONSHIP

The Bakken continues to be an important piece of the energy puzzle as oil and gas prices are forecasted to remain high through 2023. This is good news for the Bakken and will drive up production levels, but requires equipment to run as efficiently as possible. As more equipment comes online, greater stress will be placed on well site electrical systems and the overall utility grid.

## VFDs: BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES

Good power quality ensures equipment operates safely and efficiently. To improve efficiencies, variable frequency drives (VFDs) adjust the speed and torque of pumps and motors in response to system demands.

However, VFDs use pulse width modulation (PWM) to control pumps and motors. By its nature, PWM produces harmonics that distort, or “pollute,” electrical signals. These distortions create challenges for both the electrical grid (line side) and any system motors (load side).

Line side distortions, or harmonics, can

cause higher utility costs, brownouts, and electrical disruptions at neighboring facilities. To reduce harmonic disruptions, utility companies enforce regulations that levy fines against operators. If left unresolved, utilities will issue the “dreaded letter” that requires a well site to shut down.

On the load side, distortions create nuisance trippings, failed relays, and premature motor failures, which can force a site to shut down too. Given Murphy’s Law, this will also occur in the middle of the night and hours from the nearest station.

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passive filter that reduces harmonics at both high and low loads, while maintaining a strong power factor.

Our load side dV/dt filters and sinewave filters will keep your motors operating smoothly. Our patented Sinewave Nexus is the only all-in-one product available that protects against common mode motor-bearing fluting and differential mode wire insulation degradation.

To meet the higher operational demands of oil and gas operators, we launched our EnduraCap capacitors in 2021, which improved voltage breakdown by over 33 percent. Since then, we ramped up production and shipped well over 15,000 capacitors primarily to the oil patch.

Also, MTE’s creative operations team established our Power Quality Express program that allows us to ship our top 100 SKUs within two days, and also ship our next top 600 SKUs within 10 days. We did all of this to better help you remain operational and meet your production requirements.

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# Vision West ND is mobilizing Western North Dakota



*Members visited a workover rig.*



*Members gather six times a year to develop policy and learn from others.*

What could possibly bring together people from an area of more than 25,000 square miles over 19 counties covering ground from the border of South Dakota to the border of Canada? An oil and gas production boom added to coal-fired power plants and wind farms!

Western North Dakota was once a quiet region of cattle, wheat fields and few people. There had been oil production in this region, but nothing compared to what hit with the advent of Bakken shale. The region was inundated with big trucks, fast-moving pickups, and thousands of new people, all looking for a job, and most needing homes, schools, medical facilities, and child care providers – needs that had previously been sufficient for the population before the boom, but couldn't keep up once it hit. Cities and counties needed help beyond their current resources – and they needed to work together to get them.

Vision West ND was formed specifically to mobilize western North Dakota to build a resilient and prosperous quality of life. Growth was inevitable, but how was the region to grow yet maintain its roots and its quality of life? The 19 counties that provide most of the energy in North Dakota – coal, oil, gas, and

wind – believed the best way to accomplish that was through collaboration, education, and networking. More than 2,000 people attended 50 town hall meetings throughout the region to voice their opinions about how to keep their communities sustainable. What resulted was a regional plan to address important quality of life issues.

Almost 11 years later, the Vision West ND Regional Plan for Sustainability still guides the region. The 19 counties have been joined by representatives from cities, industry, chambers of commerce, businesses, economic development organizations, soil conservation districts, higher education institutions, medical facilities, and state and federal agencies. These representatives come together six times a year to collaborate on policy and become educated in new technologies. An important part of each meeting is hearing about solutions to local issues that might be replicated in other areas of the region.

Today, Vision West ND is working on what its members have identified as the top issues in the region. Workforce is number one. Communities are embracing a multi-pronged approach to the workforce issue, including career and technical education



Members learned about drone technology.

for high school and college students, incentives for families to move into communities, and cultural inclusion projects to engage new workers and keep them in the region. One of the most important priorities for workforce is addressing the child care workforce issue. Without child care workers, child care facilities close. Without child care facilities, working families look elsewhere for jobs.

An important priority is behavioral health. With huge change comes anxiety, depression, and alcohol and drug addiction. Vision West ND members are educating communities with resources to address these issues through education like Mental Health First Aid, peer support networks, and telehealth. Two

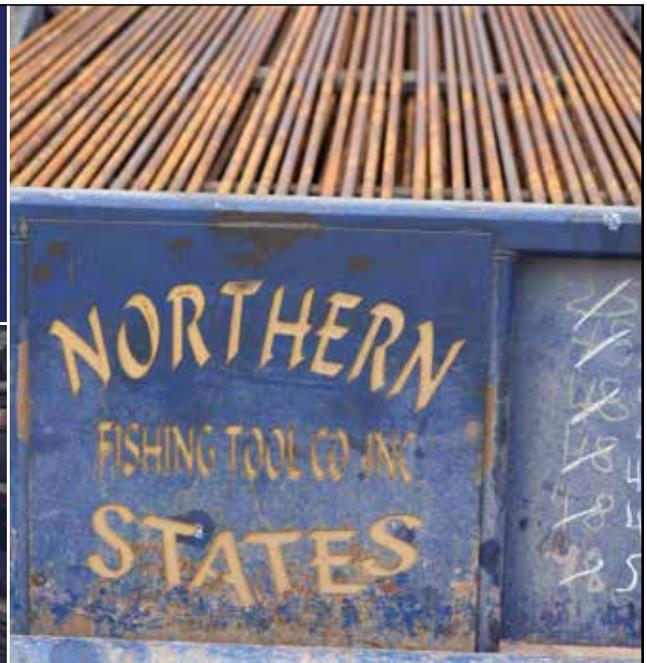
of the largest cities in the region will soon be implementing alcohol and drug treatment facilities. An annual Behavioral Health Summit in Energy Country brings people from all walks of professional life to learn about the issues and work on solutions.

When asked the importance of Vision West ND to the region, one former legislator said, "We once worked in silos with every city and county competing with all the others in western ND for pieces of the state's financial and political pie. Now, we work together, and we have been far more successful."

To learn more, visit the Vision West ND website at [www.visionwestnd.com](http://www.visionwestnd.com). ▶

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# McKenzie County, a county on the grow



*The 268,000-square-foot Rough Rider Center in Watford City has been in operation since 2016.*



*The new McKenzie County Ag Expo facility is expected in summer 2023.*

The fastest-growing county in the United States, according to the 2020 US Census, is looking towards the next decade with anticipation.

The majority of McKenzie County's growth is due to its location in the heart of the Bakken oil formation and progressive moves by community leadership to make it one of the most livable communities in the Bakken.

The 268,000-square-foot Rough Rider Center in Watford City has been in operation since 2016. The Rough Rider Center has indoor swimming, two sheets of ice, a field house, an arena, a

convention hall, classroom space, and outdoor baseball and football fields. The facility has become a favorite venue for a variety of conferences and sporting tournaments as many are choosing to return year after year. While the Rough Rider Center has proven to really show its value in the community, additional amenities are in the works.

For example, the completion of the new McKenzie County Ag Expo facility is expected in summer 2023. The facility will be the new home for the annual McKenzie County Fair, and will also be able to host a variety of events and activities throughout the rest of the year—be it rodeos, agriculture shows, motor events,



*Rendering of new daycare center to be completed in 2024.*

*The Bakken Area Skills Center has been years in the making with the goal of providing ways for the area's workforce to get local, hands-on training.*

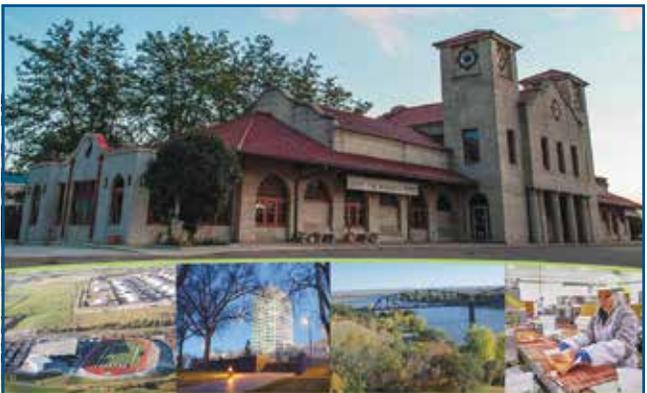


conferences, and more! This facility will boast 96,000 climate-controlled square feet and an outdoor arena. It is located right off the US Highway 85 bypass, minutes west of Watford City.

The Bakken Area Skills Center is also in the works with a projected completion date of fall 2023. This project has been years in the making with the goal of providing ways for the area's workforce to get local, hands-on training. Trainings provided at the center will be for both area high school students as well as those already in the workforce.

The community is seeking to address childcare needs with the addition of a second childcare center with capacity for an additional 180 children. Temporary modular facilities are scheduled to be in place by spring 2023 and the permanent facility is projected to be completed by fall 2024.

All these new facilities are a response to the growth of the community and the needs of its citizens and businesses. Growth brings more growth and we are excited to see Watford City and McKenzie County continue to be a location of choice for all industries and their workforce to thrive. ▸



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## Greatness awaits!



*Above: Spirit Lake has everything you need for a successful day on the lake, including bait, tackle, fishing licenses (state and tribal), fishing equipment, snacks and gas.*

*Left: The View Steakhouse is a 7,000-square-foot upscale restaurant located on the third floor.*

Whatever your recreation, it's all conveniently located on the scenic south shores of Devils Lake!

The Spirit Lake Casino & Resort features a 39,530-square-foot gaming floor with over 560 slot machines that are 100 percent ticket in-ticket out. The gaming floor includes two Blackjack tables, Let it Ride, Ultimate Texas Hold Em' and a Craps table.

The most recent addition of amenities to Spirit Lake Casino & Resort is alcohol and off sale. Recently we have converted our entertainment auditorium to the Auditorium Sports Bar featuring everything you need for a great night of fun. Watch your favorite sports teams on one of the 15- to 65-inch TV screens, play a game of pool, darts or cornhole. The Spirit Lake Liquor Store, located near the Auditorium Sports Bar, is open Monday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m., and on Sunday from 12 p.m. to 11 p.m.



*Spirit Lake Casino & Resort is your premiere entertainment destination.*

Spirit Lake Casino & Resort is your premiere entertainment destination. The Spirit Lake Auditorium Sports Bar offers live music monthly, and once a month the auditorium is converted back to our 950-stadium seating for our big monthly concerts from fall to spring. During the summer we take our premiere entertainment outdoors for bigger capacity and even bigger names at the Outdoor Entertainment Arena.

The View Steakhouse is a 7,000-square-foot upscale restaurant located on the third floor. The View offers a 180-degree lake view, self-tinting glass, perfect lighting and steam LED fireplace creating an amazing ambiance to dine in. The View is open from Tuesday through Saturday from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. and offers happy hour specials and weekday specials. Enjoy other dining options for your dining experience, including a snack bar located on the gaming floor, which also offers a select variety of alcohol beverages. The grill is open daily from 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. and 11 p.m. to 1:30 a.m. for beverages. The Dakotah Buffet is open Thursday through Monday from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. and offers an all-you-can-eat salad bar, daily special entrees, side dishes and desserts.

Spirit Lake Grocery is open seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. Spirit Lake Grocery offers great weekly specials, a butcher for custom meat orders, custom birthday cake orders, and curbside or delivery service. The Spirit Lake Marina offers the best lake access in the area. They are open seven days a week from 6 a.m. to 2 a.m. Spirit Lake has everything you need for a successful day on the lake, including bait, tackle, fishing licenses (state and tribal), fishing equipment, snacks and gas. Rentals are available for boats, pontoons, cabins or RV sites.

The Spirit Lake Hotel features 122 rooms and suites. Styles include standard, poolside, and whirlpool family suites. Many



*Spirit Lake Grocery offers great weekly specials, a butcher for custom meat orders, custom birthday cake orders and curbside or delivery service.*

rooms offer a scenic view of Devils Lake. There is also a four-story atrium pool with waterslide, wading pool, hot tub and steam room. Spirit Lake also offers the best banquet and meeting room space in the area with different-sized rooms to suit your needs. Our Showroom has space for up to 500, the Cedar & Walking Eagle Ballrooms for groups up to 200 and the Tipi Room or pool area for birthday parties of up to 35.

For more information, visit our website at [www.spiritlakecasino.com](http://www.spiritlakecasino.com), or call us at (701) 766-4747. ▀

## If you need it – we do it!



G-Style Energy Services, with our affiliated companies, has the equipment, expertise and connections to exceed customer expectations. We stand by our tagline “If you need it, we do it, or we have the connections to get it done.”

G-Style Energy Services is a local, family-owned, oilfield service company deeply rooted in the Bakken with over 20 years of experience. Our mission is to provide the best service and best quality for our customers. We pride ourselves in being a local Williston-based company. Decisions are made locally and timely with no corporate board, banker, committee, or other external approvals that could interfere with daily operations. The owners strive to build a personal relationship with each customer, with the goal to be your first and only call for all your oilfield service needs.

We started in the Bakken over 12 years ago with a couple of trucks and a philosophy that we will do whatever it takes to get the job done right. Since that time, we have invested heavily in our employees with every employee going through extensive training and certifications before entering a customer location. Additionally, we have greatly expanded and updated our fleet of trucks and equipment to where most are 2020 or newer – all to ensure reliability for our customers and safety for our employees.

G-Style Energy Services is the service arm of our companies, focusing on drill site preparation, spill cleanup and mitigation, HAZMAT material hauling, and roustabout services. We are the preferred spill mitigation company for both Williams and Mountrail Counties.

G-Style Transport is our transportation company with almost

100 semitrucks and 150 trailers, along with hydrovac, frac and upright tanks, and various other equipment to service the oilfield. We specialize in logistics, cuttings, water hauling, frac sand, equipment, hotshot, frac and upright tanks, and fluids management. G-Style Transport is a licensed North Dakota waste hauler, including TENORM, with connections to all of the major disposal sites and material suppliers in the Bakken.

GST Casing also falls under our umbrella of companies, with the tools and equipment to handle all your casing, tubing, and downhole needs. Our crews are the best in the Bakken and have the quality and drive to ensure we are the fastest and the safest in the Bakken.

Finally, T2 Environmental and our partnership with Roughrider Disposal (Prairie Disposal, Prairie Liquids, Chimney Butte, Smoky Butte) is the only company in the Bakken with multiple E&P disposal sites strategically placed to handle all your E&P waste disposal needs.

Want to join our team?

We are always looking for skilled employees to meet the ever-growing demand of our customers. We are on the hunt for experienced CDL drivers, hydrovac operators, casing hands, roustabouts, mechanics, and equipment operators. Lack oilfield experience? With our extensive training and mentoring programs, we will put you on the road to success.

For more information, please contact us at 701-264-3097 or [info@gstyleenergy.com](mailto:info@gstyleenergy.com). You can also visit us online at [www.gstyleenergy.com](http://www.gstyleenergy.com). ▀

# QUALITY ISN'T EXPENSIVE, IT'S PRICELESS



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G-Style Energy with its affiliated companies: G-Style Transport, GST Casing and T2 Environmental take immense pride in providing best in class customer service.

### G-STYLE TRANSPORT:

- Side Dump • Vac Trailer • Heavy Haul • Water • Winch Trucks
- Spill Cleanup/Mitigation • Site Preparation • HydroVac Services • Frac Sand

**GST CASING SERVICES:** Casing, Racking Services

**T2 ENVIRONMENTAL:** with 3 locations we can manage all your E&P waste disposal needs



### WHO WE ARE

Family owned and operated since 2004 and have been servicing the Bakken for 12 years. G-Style promotes from within, so the same people that built the company are still here to ensure the same quality of service that our valued customers have become accustomed to.

### WHAT WE DO

G-Style is the leader in hauling drill cuttings and drilling waste fluid in North Dakota. We haul aggregate, drill cuttings, drilling fluid, fresh water, production water, equipment, pipe and anything else our customers need to move.

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# Watford City's Best of the West Ribfest is a celebration of community



*From left to right: The Best of the West Ribfest, Street Fair and Car Show has been a signature event in the community of Watford City for 16 years. In 2022 competitors served over two tons of ribs on Main Street. Team E&M celebrating their Judge's Choice first-place Ribfest win.*

Ask anyone in McKenzie County and Watford City about their favorite event of the year and they will say Ribfest. Ask anyone in a 300-mile radius and they will have heard that Watford City's Ribfest does it right.

The Best of the West Ribfest, Street Fair and Car Show has been a signature event in the community of Watford City, on the western region of North Dakota, for 16 years. The Watford City Area Chamber of Commerce started this event during a time when the community looked entirely different than it does today and it seems as the town has grown and changed, so has the dynamic of Ribfest – both reflecting a neighborly pride, an inclusive and welcoming environment, and a celebration of summer, music and good food.

Started in 2003 as a way to encourage motorcyclists traveling to and from Sturgis to make a stop in Watford City, the event has grown from a small gathering of chamber members and business owners with grills at their storefronts to an annual event that fills the street with over 20 rib competitors, dozens of crafters, vendors and makers, a kid zone, a classic car and truck show, food vendors, and concerts featuring nationally touring and chart-topping country acts which brings crowds close to 6,000 filling Main Street from north to south. Concerts over the recent years have featured Craig Morgan, Little Texas, Ricochet, Love and Theft,

Jamie O'Neal, Joe Nichols and Wynona Judd.

In 2022 competitors served over two tons of ribs on Main Street. In addition to cooking ribs for the public, many of the teams also serve lunch throughout the day. The winners are chosen by a secret panel of community members and often the winners donate their prize money and sales back to the community. Throughout their years of participation, Jones Contractors has consistently donated all of their earnings to the Police Foundation for their Blue Santa program.

Want to know the most unique part? All of this is free to guests thanks to the support and enthusiasm of the community, sponsors, volunteers and the commitment of the Watford City Area Chamber of Commerce. Offering this quality of entertainment to a community in a public space, free of charge, is unprecedented, not only in our part of the country, but anywhere. Watford City's Ribfest is so successful because it is a reflection of the positive qualities and dynamics of the community and a continued vision of the importance of neighborly celebration and a big welcome mat.

There really is something for everyone at the Best of the West Ribfest.

Find out more at [www.watfordcityribfest.com](http://www.watfordcityribfest.com). ▶



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