



Sunday, March 18, 2012

## **More momentum: editorial**

### ***Shale-gas hopes boosted by plan for new Ohio plant***

<http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/editorials/2012/03/18/more-momentum.html>

In another sign that Ohio stands to benefit handsomely from drilling for natural gas and oil, Chesapeake Energy announced last week that it and two partners will invest \$900 million in a natural-gas processing plant in the heart of the Utica Shale region that covers a wide swath of eastern and southern Ohio and parts of central Ohio.

Columbiana County, about 35 miles east of Canton, will be the site of the plant that will be the largest of its type in the state. Parts of the project — a co-venture of Chesapeake, M3 Midstream and EV Energy Partners — are expected to be in service as early as June of next year.

Chesapeake hasn't yet released employment estimates, but a smaller plant announced by Dominion next year, being built in Natrium, West Va., along the Ohio River, is expected to employ 70 people.

Estimates of the number of jobs Ohio will gain over the next few years from hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, for oil and natural gas have ranged broadly from 20,000 to 205,000. A study released last month by the Ohio Shale Coalition pegged the number at just under 66,000 by 2014. That report estimated that the state's economy will get a boost of nearly \$5 billion from the industry during that time.

Gov. John Kasich has just unveiled new taxes and fees to make sure that drillers exploiting Ohio's natural resources fairly compensate the state and its citizens for those riches.

And state taxpayers could directly benefit from Kasich's proposal to use the windfall from "frack taxes" to give citizens a break on their state income taxes that could begin at 1.6 percent in 2014 and escalate to 5.4 percent by 2017.

The Chesapeake announcement is just the latest news; in December, Houston-based energy-products-and-services giant Halliburton said it will bring about 300 jobs to Zanesville to serve its customers that are moving into the Utica Shale. Ohio lost out last week to Pennsylvania to land a big Shell Oil plant, but still should benefit from some spinoff jobs from that \$1 billion project near the Ohio border.

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