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Realizing West Virginia's Potential: Value added opportunities from natural gas

Charleston, W.Va. - Natural gas production from shale rock has transformed the nation's energy landscape in ways that are well-documented; yet much remains to be learned about its potentially exciting future. New technologies like horizontal drilling have unlocked vast deposits of natural gas and this newly tapped domestic energy has the capacity to reignite our country's manufacturing sector, change the way we fuel our vehicles, power our homes, and even transform the global balance of power.

The Marcellus and Utica shale underlie West Virginia, but comprehensive research about how West Virginians might be well-positioned to benefit from the resource is lacking. In 2012 **Vision Shared** formed an ad-hoc Shale Opportunity Committee co-chaired by Maribeth Anderson of Chesapeake Energy Corporation and Steve White of the Affiliated Construction Trades Foundation. The Vision Shared Board, advised by the committee, commissioned the Marshall University Center for Business and Economic Research to provide a report on the state's ability to grow investment, jobs, and wealth as a result of this natural resource.

"One key benefit of an organization like Vision Shared is that while people represent different goals and constituents, all are genuinely interested in what's best for West Virginia's future. Vision Shared became the perfect forum to explore the ways West Virginians can benefit from the shale gas opportunity," said Maribeth Anderson of Chesapeake Energy and a member of the Vision Shared Board of Directors.

The report, now available at www.visionshared.com highlights West Virginia's potential for realizing the benefit of shale resources as well as certain policies currently in place in West Virginia which promote the State as an ideal environment for long term industry development. Among the discussion points are how natural gas vehicles are being used in other states, benefits to manufacturers in West Virginia, and the long term outlook for natural gas supply and pricing.

"Development of Marcellus and Utica Shale presents a fantastic opportunity for West Virginians, but an opportunity is not a guarantee. Now is the time to focus on how we can work together to maximize the benefits and minimize problems," said Steve White of the Affiliated Construction Trades Foundation and member of the Vision Shared Board of Directors.

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Vision Shared Inc. is a statewide nonprofit, nonpartisan community and economic development organization in West Virginia. Its mission is to strengthen the economy, transform communities, promote progressive government and improve the quality of life for West Virginians. Learn more at www.visionshared.com.