

March 1

Kevin DiGregorio 7:00-8:00

West Virginia Wants a Cracker

Abstract

West Virginia developed the world's first cracker to turn ethane into ethylene in the 1920's, and by the 1960's or so, the Kanawha Valley region had several world-scale crackers providing raw materials to a host of chemical manufacturing facilities for Union Carbide, DuPont, Monsanto, FMC, and other chemical companies. However, the last cracker in West Virginia was dismantled in the 1970's. Now, with recent developments of large natural gas reserves in the Marcellus Shale and the large amounts of ethane contained in those deposits, it's time for West Virginia to get a cracker again. And if successful, we will not only see ethane turned into ethylene in our region once again, but will also see billions of dollars in investments and hundreds of jobs created in our area. Opportunities and challenges will be discussed.

Bio

Kevin DiGregorio is the Executive Director of the Chemical Alliance Zone. The Chemical Alliance Zone (CAZ) was created in 1999 to channel and leverage efforts to strengthen our local chemical industry. A nonprofit collaborative of citizens, labor leaders, educators, government officials, chemical executives and business leaders, the CAZ is dedicated to maintaining and expanding the business of chemistry throughout West Virginia. Using a synergistic approach, the CAZ promotes the region to chemical companies, businesses that use their products and entities that produce related consumer-end goods.

For decades the chemical industry has been vital to the economic and educational structure of West Virginia. The industry is responsible for more than 10,000 direct jobs and nearly 45,500 indirect jobs in West Virginia. The engineers and scientists who have been attracted to our region have enhanced our local schools and institutions of higher learning.