

VIEW*&*VISIONS

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Greg Kozera is the Director of Marketing and Sales for Shale Crescent USA, a regional non-profit research and economic development marketing organization. He is also a professional engineer with a master's in environmental engineering and over 40 years of experience in the energy industry. Kozera is a leadership expert, high school soccer coach, professional speaker, and an author of four books and numerous published articles.

Better Together

Americans want good health and safety for themselves and their families. They want clean air and clean water. They want jobs and financial security. They want to be happy. We may not always agree on how to get things done, but if we can agree on the dream (the end result), we can find ways to work together.

We are currently in the biggest manufacturing growth period the Ohio River Valley has seen in decades. Shell's cracker plant in Monaca, Pennsylvania is operational. Intel is under construction in Columbus. Nucor Steel is under construction in Mason County near Point Pleasant, West Virginia. These are major wins for all three states, and all three states will benefit from each of these major projects. The Shell cracker employs people from Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia. Ohioans will gladly cross the Ohio River to work at Nucor Steel. Intel's CEO said all of their suppliers will be within a 500-mile radius of Columbus.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2023, said U.S. manufacturing now employs over 13 million people, which is the USA's highest level since 2008. The states of West Virginia,



companies coming to West Virginia, with the promise of over 1,000 jobs.

Many previously announced projects are now under construction and creating good jobs. There are also many smaller projects. My friend in Jackson County, West Virginia, added three additional processing lines and over 20 jobs at his facility this year. Green Power is in operation in South Charleston, West Virginia, manufacturing electric school buses. TCL, a company from India, is under construction in the Ohio Valley near New Martinsville, West Virginia. The Eastern Panhandle is booming, as is the Ohio Valley. The rest of West Virginia is also seeing growth.

I met recently with the leadership of the Parkersburg Marietta Building Trades Council (PMBTC). Their members are busy working locally. PMBTC now has a different problem: attracting more people to become apprentices to "earn while you learn."

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Pennsylvania, and Ohio are seeing incredible economic growth. At the West Virginia Chamber of Commerce's annual business summit this year, there were three major economic development announcements of new

Shale Crescent USA's mission is to encourage business growth along the Ohio River Valley based upon low natural gas prices that allow manufacturers to operate more efficiently while producing products more economically.



With access to water, half the population of the United States and Canada, and to 70% of U.S. Polyethylene and 77% Polypropylene demand, Shale Crescent USA delivers targeted messaging to high energy-intensive industry decision makers and advances synergies with local, regional, and state economic development organizations.

At a recent conference that we attended, a speaker from Germany reported that his country now has the highest cost electricity in the world. They chose to shut down most of their nuclear power and coal plants in favor of renewables, which produce 46% of their electricity. When Russia shut off natural gas deliveries, the Germans were forced to restart coal power plants. Current German electric rates are over \$.61 per kwh. CNBC reported, “German energy prices are so high, they are driving companies to relocate.” The USA is one of the places they are relocating to. Shale Crescent USA is currently working with companies from Europe who are interested in coming here because of our economical and abundant energy.

WTI crude oil is \$92.92 per barrel. Americans are feeling pain at the pump. High fuel costs drive up the cost of almost everything. Meanwhile, Russia and OPEC are benefiting. Without spending money to drill, they received a price increase of over \$50 per barrel in four years.



Nathan Lord, President of Shale Crescent USA, presenting in Mumbai, India to 80% of the Indian petrochemical industry at the annual ICC conference.

One of the biggest strengths of our region is abundant natural gas. Only the rest of the USA and Russia produce more natural gas than our region. The Shale Crescent USA states of West Virginia, Ohio, and Pennsylvania produce twice as much natural gas as China, a country that is energy poor. Natural gas isn't just a fuel for heating and cooking. Natural gas and natural gas liquids, like methane, ethane, propane, and butane, are the building blocks for thousands of products making modern

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Better Together

life possible. Cell phones, medical products, PPE, EVs, and even solar panels are all natural gas products.

China uses oil for most of their manufacturing molecules. It takes 6 MCF of natural gas to produce the energy equivalent of one barrel of oil. Natural gas prices on the Gulf Coast are \$2.89 per MCF. In our region, natural gas is \$1.25 per MCF, the lowest price in the industrialized world. For \$7.50, our region gets the same amount of energy as a \$92.92 barrel of oil. Natural gas is why we have a huge manufacturing advantage over Europe, Asia, and other parts of the U.S.

There are people who would like to see us move away from natural gas to renewables like Germany has done. The speaker said Germany is at a turning point and moving back to fossil fuels. What they are doing isn't unsustainable. Manufacturing is going overseas. People are upset with high energy costs. Germany can't compete with China and is importing most manufactured products. Like the USA, Germany is responsible for the increase in global emissions by enabling Chinese manufacturing. China is increasing use of coal. We can stop enabling Chinese emissions by manufacturing in the USA.

We are better together and more powerful when we work together as a region. The Shale Crescent USA network has experts from all three states who can help prospects. It makes good sense for our region to develop its strengths of natural gas and human resources. Developing natural gas and infrastructure keeps our energy prices low and brings manufacturing to the Ohio River Valley. The resulting high wage jobs raise the standard of living for people who live here. **V**