

\$4.50. Issues like geography, conversion costs and Henry Hub pricing have all played a factor in natural gas's role in the economy. However, the term "wet gas" seems to put this resource over the edge and into the next level of capitalism. Extracting the layers, or molecules, can become complex and specific quite quickly, but the overall concept is something the average person can grasp.

"You don't need to review your chemistry to understand it, but, the way to think about it is in a cubic-foot of natural gas produced in the Williston Basin you will find somewhere around 8-12 gallons of raw natural gas

liquids," John Gibson, former CEO, ONEOK and non-executive chairman of the Board, ONEOK Partners said. "That's ethane, propane, butanes all mixed up. If you go down into Oklahoma or the Texas in the pan handle, that same cubic foot will have say, three gallons per MCF. As you can tell by the numbers there is a whole lot of natural gas liquids in the Williston Basin."

Reports from the Energy Information Agency reinforce Gibson's testimony that Bakken offers some of the richest NGLs in the country. Breaking down the NGL market even further, each well drilled contains a great deal of ethane, propane, butane and natural gasoline,

which can be stripped out, fractionated and put into the gas pipeline network. This process is not necessarily new in oil and gas, but is relatively new to North Dakota.

"With respects to the Marcellus and other shale plays that are offshore, the NGL technologies are proven but the locations are new," Don Bari, Vice President, Technology and Analytics Groups, IHS Chemical, said. "All the infrastructure is already set up in the Gulf so that has had an early influence."

IHS Inc. is a global consulting and information company contracted by the North Dakota Department of

Commerce to complete several reports on value-added products and is scheduled to report their final findings in January 2015, after several presentations to subcommittees of the evolving report along the way.

According to Bari, three of the foundational building blocks — ethane, propane and butane — are found in the Bakken's wet gas. Gathering the information and attempting to disseminate this information to the proper carbon can seem like a daunting task, however, Bari, is able to offer a simply solution to a complex situation — the number of carbons.

“ I think when you look at what is going on in the Bakken, the idea of using value-added natural gas products inside the ag business and to compliment the ag business, I think there is a remarkable opportunity. I think it is important to the viability of both businesses. And I think the sky's the limit. ”



TOM STROMME/Tribune file photo

The Reiss site east of Killdeer close to highway 200 will soon have a Marathon Oil Company rig putting in a oil well more that 20,000 feet deep.