



Associated Press

A BNSF Railway train hauls crude oil west of Wolf Point, Mont., on Nov. 6, 2013.

to around \$8M. That is a \$5.3M efficiency tweak in one year, or near 50 percent savings.

Generally speaking with Ekstrom, Whiting's average pad is paid off in 18 months, can be torn down, relocated and constructed in four days. They can drill multiple wells and the large structures can actually crawl or walk the earth to the next well. The whole industry is seeing significant savings and ecological efficiencies with pad drilling.

"The energy industry often gets a bad rap on the environmental side of things," Schafer said. "The Minneapolis Fed board took all their people out to the Bakken a few months ago and they were blown away by the attention to safety and environment the oil companies do."

Exploration drilling began in the late 1990s, increased in 2004, took off in 2008 and became an international frenzy

since mid-2013. Some believe the Bakken has begun to dip, while others believe it has leveled off. Nevertheless,

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oil and gas producing communities have been racing to build roads, treat water and lay pipe in an attempt to create, preserve and advance a better lifestyle for those impacted by the surge of economic activity. According to Schafer, the oil activity accelerated at a pace that caught many communities off-guard resulting in a rapid catch-up game.

"In terms of infrastructure, the investment into western North Dakota and the oil impact counties is

tremendous," Schafer said. "The state legislature put \$2.5B into infrastructure development in western North Dakota.

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North Dakota State Treasurer Kelly Schmidt said her office is in contact with many oil and gas communities at both the city and county level.

"I think a lot of it has to do with timing. Things have hit hard and the needs are many," Schmidt said. "We need to try to balance the needs and the wants and work them through. I know the state is working hard to partner with the

counties, townships and cities to help mitigate some of that debt issue."

Schmidt added that this type of debt is designed to pay off in the long run and meant to be an investment to the city.

"We just have to continue to work together," Schmidt said. "It isn't going to happen overnight. Just trying to get the roads adjusted — we have the resources, but to have the time and talent to get those jobs done is going to take some time."

Brian Hymel, CEO of Five Diamonds Industrial Park, initially brought in the infrastructure to the industrial park located on Highway 22, right on the Dunn County line a few miles outside of Dickinson.

"We got into the Bakken early and the infrastructure wasn't in sync with our timelines, so we ended up bringing in