

# NDSU president Dean Bresciani charged up by Bakken technology

North Dakota State University president Dean Bresciani is very familiar with energy plays and boom bust cycles. His previous experiences in Texas allowed



**JASON SPIESS**  
For Bakken Breakout  
Weekly

him to consume oil and gas on a day-to-day basis. Only his consumption was more intense than the average industry professional. It involved research and finance.

So when I sat down with the president, I asked him if North Dakota was looking more and more like a North Texas. After a brief pause, Bresciani responded with a voice filled with the energy of experience.

"It really is in some ways; advantageously, geologically and the location of the reserves. It has been interesting to me. My doctoral training is in finance and economics," Bresciani said. "So when I hear the understandable, and a North Dakotan says this is just another boom and bust cycle like the old boom and bust cycles. Which is a learned behavior and reaction, it's just not founded in science."

Bresciani continued explaining the location of the known reserves, how extensive they are and what it costs to get the energy out.

"They are not going anywhere obviously," Bresciani said. "So really the limitation and capacities are economically based and price based and technology based."

"I say technology because actions by [Saudi Arabia] have a major impact on the worldwide market for energy, and they can adjust pricing simply by their own behavior. When we say prices are dropping or have dropped, they are coming from all-time record levels," Bresciani said. "The reality is we are still extracting huge quantities of energy and people



North Dakota State University President Dean Bresciani and Jason Spiess.

JASON SPIESS, Tribune

are still making a lot of money doing it. And tax revenues from those extractions are still pouring in the state of North Dakota."

Bresciani also made clear the general thought towards the Bakken being in bust mode was misguided.

"The notion that this is a bust cycle and everything is going bad is really a misnomer and the Saudis already demonstrated that they understand they cannot continue the behaviors they are using because they are losing money," Bresciani said. "That's a long winded way of saying prices are going to play back up. Consumer won't like that, but the reality is on the worldwide market we are going to see it, it is inevitable. It is only a when, not an if, the prices

with go back up. Again, those assets are still in the ground; so even if the prices didn't go back up for 100 years, the asset is still in the ground and is extractable."

He also pointed out this time in the

Bakken's history is critical for some companies who may not have adequate resources or long-term strategies.

"This is an interesting commodity price fluctuation, but it is also for the smarter players the opportunity to consume more of the market share so when prices go back up you've advantageously positioned yourself to be more successful," Bresciani said. "Again the asset is just sitting there waiting to be extracted, it is not going anywhere and it not like a crop where if it goes bad you have to start over. The asset is sitting there totally extractable."

In the big picture, Bresciani sees the Bakken and the energy play in North Dakota as an incredible opportunity to solidify the energy industry and the University's research role.

"The entire state has a window of opportunity," Bresciani said. "There is really no place in the nation that has similar opportunities. But I also think that motivation and capacity, with the possible exception of Texas, where there are some similar dynamics there with the two major research universities and energy extensive economic development sector... North Dakota has a differentiating factor, which is the chance to strengthen and diversify [an] economy [which] has never existed for this state, whereas Texas

comes and goes with that opportunity and a plethora of other opportunities."

He believes there are a number of new opportunities in the state for business and innovation.

"North Dakota is a brass ring. They can now grab at which they were not even able to see before, much less grab at it. I think we are slowly and steadily coming to that realization," Bresciani said.

The UAS industry is one he believes will become a model for many other technology-based companies and services.

"The role our two universities can have and utilizing our friends in agriculture and energy extraction as being catalysts for technology development relative to those fields but a lot of other fields as well. UAS would be a great example of that," Bresciani said.



Jason Spiess is a multi-media journalist and host of Building the Bakken Radio. Building the Bakken Radio can be heard in Bismarck on SuperTalk KLXX 1270AM on Sundays at 10am CT. To see if your listening area carries the radio program or see the entire Building the Bakken Media Network, visit [www.buildingthebakken.com](http://www.buildingthebakken.com). Spiess can be contacted at [jason@buildingthebakken.com](mailto:jason@buildingthebakken.com).