



VIEW*S* & VISIONS

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Fueling West Virginia for the Future

Jeff Isner, Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer
Pillar Energy LLC

Jeff Isner is the co-founder and CEO of Pillar Energy LLC, an oil and gas production company operating more than 1,000 oil and gas wells in West Virginia and Ohio. Prior to founding Pillar Energy, he worked in the marketing and measurement sectors of the oil and gas industry.

Isner received his bachelor's degree in economics and international business in 2005 and his master's degree in business administration in 2006, both from West Virginia Wesleyan College.

He is the founder of Shoes 4 Strangers, created to collect and distribute shoes to local community organizations. He also serves on the board of directors for the Independent Oil and Gas Association (IOGA) of West Virginia, where he chairs the communications and education committee and serves on the commerce committee.

Coming out of college, I was frustrated at the number of friends and fellow graduates leaving West Virginia to find employment opportunities elsewhere. While I did not have the same dilemma, I always wanted to give back to the state where I grew up by trying to keep West Virginians working in West Virginia. I started Pillar Energy with my partner six years ago, in my basement, and grew it into one of the top oil and gas companies in the state. Our company owns and/or operates more than 1,000 wells in West Virginia and Ohio, and I am proud to say all of our employees live in this region.

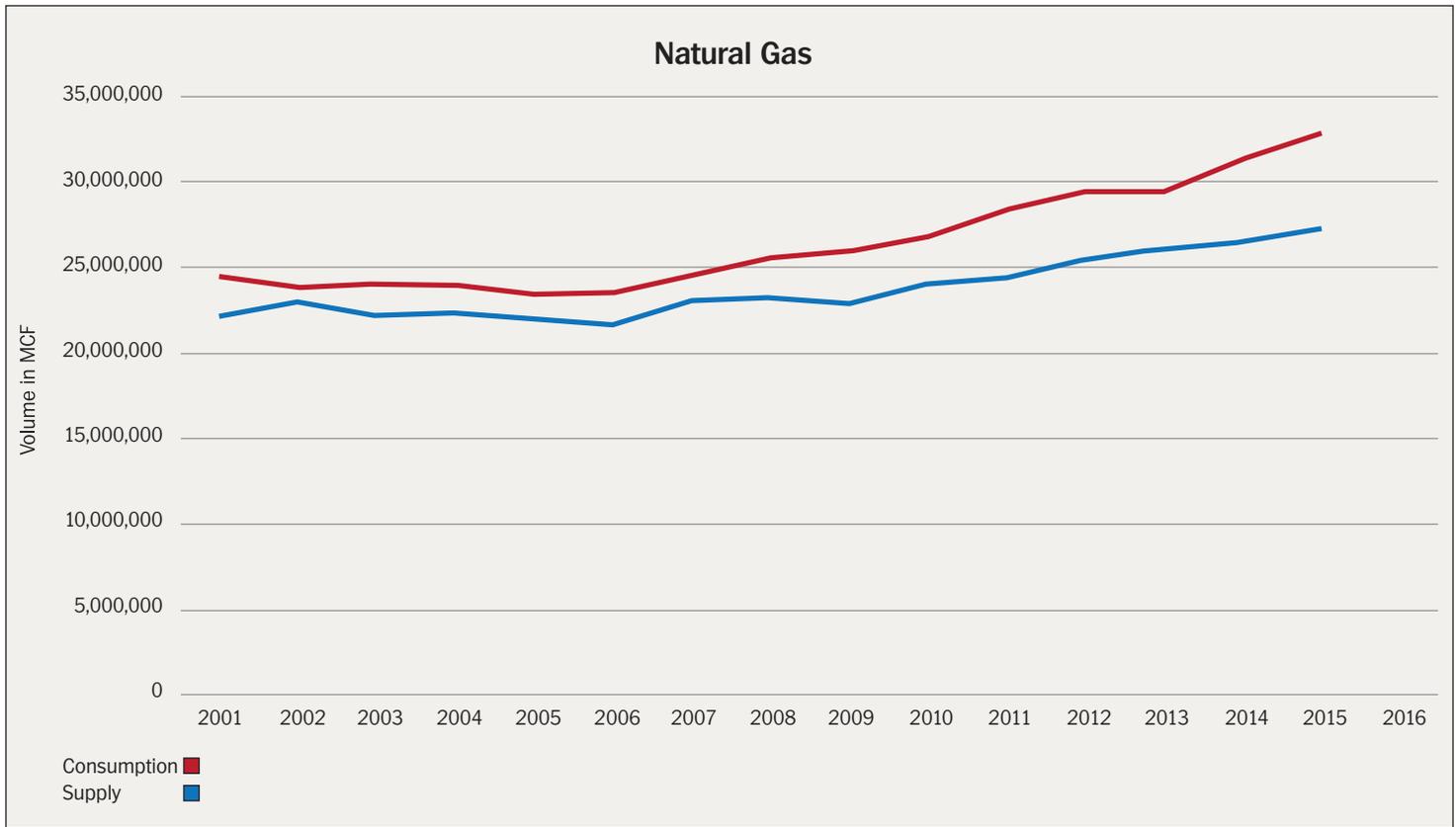
Our company is working throughout the region to provide energy to companies and individuals through many different pipeline agreements. The energy we provide allows individuals to heat their homes, drive their vehicles and use everyday household items, whether it be the



plastics we use, the clothes we wear or the medicines we need. Our region and nation's backbone is energy, and West Virginia has always been willing to meet that demand. Our company is no different, in that we strive to safely and reliably extract the natural resources we have been given to meet the needs of society.

I have always felt that ideas and vision can come from anywhere or anyone, so when I had the opportunity to start my company, age did not deter me. I was sure to surround myself with business and industry experts to ensure I had a sounding board for the challenges we would face. Those people have encouraged and taught me a great deal. I have always felt that you should continue to learn regardless of your age, and if you meet situations and challenges with humility and are willing to heed advice, you will always be learning.

My company has gone through many challenges in our short tenure, including strained market conditions and increasingly burdensome regulations. I have always wanted to stay on track with our vision and the goals I set out to accomplish when I started. The challenge we face going forward is educating the communities in which we live and our leaders as to the benefits of oil and natural gas, as well as the need for those resources. We have been spoiled in America by being blessed with abundant energy. It is up to my generation to ensure that the energy needs of our region and our country are



Supply and demand for natural gas continues to increase according to data provided by the U.S. Energy Information Administration

met. I have found no better place to do that than in my home state.

Given the upward trajectory (see chart), our region will continue to play a major part in our nation’s energy future. That future has to have individuals willing to carry the torch.

The energy industry has recently been injected with a youth movement. Governing.com shows the oil and gas extraction industry as having an average employee age of 45 years. The Marcellus and Utica Shale discovered in our region has created tremendous job opportunities, and many young people are taking advantage of those jobs. My position within the Independent Oil and Gas Association (IOGA) has been to chair the communications and education committee. We are working on educating our youth through curriculum in our schools and the Tom Dunn Academy, a three-day workshop at West Virginia Wesleyan College that gives high school students a hands-on approach to the jobs related to our industry.

I continue to believe we have a lot of talent coming out of our region. One of my challenges is to ensure that talent stays closer to home so that our region can grow and continue to lead the nation in energy supply. I continue to meet bright, young individuals who are willing to accept the challenges we face within the energy industry. But, whether it be through energy, finance, education, health care, tourism or manufacturing, our generation has to be willing to cast a vision and work toward accomplishing that vision. My vision is that we, as Americans, can gain energy independence and do so in a safe and reliable manner while meeting the energy needs of our generation, as well as that of future generations. ▽