



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**BEN FRANKLIN'S SHALE GAS INNOVATION COMPETITION EXPANDING TO INCLUDE WEST VIRGINIA!**

**STATE COLLEGE, PA** - The Ben Franklin Shale Gas Innovation & Commercialization Center ([www.sgicc.org](http://www.sgicc.org)), an initiative that identifies and helps commercialize shale gas related technologies that enhance responsible stewardship of the environment while creating high paying jobs has received a grant from the Benedum Foundation that will allow the 2013-14 Shale Gas Innovation Contest to expand to include West Virginia.

The Shale Gas Innovation Contest, which just announced this year's winners on May 7, 2013, has become a popular annual event. Seventy-one applicants participated from all across the state of Pennsylvania, vying for a total of \$75,000 in prize money. The next contest will now cover both Pennsylvania and West Virginia, and the SGICC has lined up three key partners in West Virginia to assist with marketing the event and helping to identify potential applicants across the state: TechConnectWV; INNOVA Commercialization Group; and the West Virginia University Office of Research & Economic Development.

Bill Hall, Director of SGICC commented, "We received very high-quality applications for the last two contests, and many of the concepts were really impressive. Topics covered the entire gamut of the shale gas play from exploration and extraction technologies, environmental and safety products and service concepts, water and wastewater focused technologies, data management concepts, and even multiple downstream gas and NGL utilization technologies. We are very excited to expand the next competition to include entrepreneurs and small businesses located in West Virginia that have shale gas related ideas, and I want to thank the Benedum Foundation for providing us the support to make this happen."

Anne Barth, Executive Director of TechConnectWV noted, "We are really excited to partner with the Shale Gas Innovation & Commercialization Center to make this contest a regional enterprise. There are so many opportunities for entrepreneurs to get engaged in the shale gas play."

Applications for the 2013-2014 Contest will be made available in the November timeframe. Bill Hall noted, "We wanted to get the word out now to the stakeholders in West Virginia so all of the

economic development groups across the state can start encouraging entrepreneurs and small companies with ideas to contact us now. This is a year round effort that we undertake, and our goal is to help advance all ideas that have merit. It's never too soon to reach out to us."

Guy Peduto, Director of the INNOVA Commercialization Group, an initiative of the WV High Technology Consortium Foundation, also voiced his support for the initiative. "I attended the recent Innovation Contest event and was impressed by the technologies that were on display. I know we have entrepreneurs in West Virginia exploring ideas that can impact the shale gas play, and INNOVA is interested in helping to identify the opportunities and advance the most promising ones."

Lindsay Emery, Business Development Manager at West Virginia University noted, "There are researchers at the University that have been exploring many aspects of the shale gas process. This contest may offer some of them an opportunity to have their ideas vetted."

Sponsors are already lining up to support the 2013-2014 Contest including: Ben Franklin Technology Partners (<http://www.benfranklin.org>), Acorn Energy (<http://acornenergy.com>), CONSOL Energy ([www.consolenergy.com](http://www.consolenergy.com)), First National Bank ([www.fnb-online.com](http://www.fnb-online.com)), Little Pine Resources (<http://littlepineresources.com>), the Marcellus Shale Coalition (<http://marcelluscoalition.org>), and Praxair ([www.praxair.com](http://www.praxair.com)). Additional sponsors are expected to come on board shortly, and SGICC welcomes interest from other companies or organizations interested in participating.

### **About the SGICC**



The Ben Franklin Shale Gas Innovation & Commercialization Center is funded in part by the Department of Community & Economic Development and the Ben Franklin Technology Development Authority. The Ben Franklin Shale Gas Innovation and Commercialization Center ([www.sgicc.org](http://www.sgicc.org)) supports and commercializes early-stage technologies that enhance responsible stewardship of the environment while properly utilizing this energy asset.