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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Beaver County's economy grew as Shell invested in cracker plant**

*Critics off base when they say petrochemical complex "failed to create economic growth"*

PITTSBURGH – Beaver County's economy expanded significantly and created thousands of new jobs as Shell Chemical Appalachia launched its multi-billion ethylene cracker plant, federal data show.

In the years before the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020, Beaver County grew jobs far faster than the overall Pittsburgh region, the state of Pennsylvania, and the U.S, according to data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Beaver County's economy expanded twice as fast as the rest of the state, and faster than the U.S. economy overall, gross domestic product (GDP) data show.

The numbers undercut the claim by the Ohio River Valley Institute that "the Shell petrochemical complex has failed to produce economic growth in Beaver County." The Institute is scheduled to release a report on that subject on Tuesday morning.



Ohio River Valley Institute  
@O\_R\_V\_I

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Save the date: a forthcoming report from [@O\\_R\\_V\\_I](#) shows that the Shell petrochemical complex has failed to produce economic growth in Beaver County.

Learn more on Tuesday, Nov. 30: [bit.ly/3HNs8jR](https://bit.ly/3HNs8jR)

"Once again, the Ohio River Valley Institute issues a report with no credibility. Its first report on the supposed failure of the shale gas economy had to be withdrawn and corrected because *Pittsburgh Works* pointed out data errors," said Jeff Nobers, executive director of *Pittsburgh Works Together*. "This summer, it presented misleading data to the U.S. Department of Energy that ignored the economic success of counties at the heart of the shale gas industry."

Research briefs from Pittsburgh Works analyzing the ORVI’s earlier work can be found at <https://pghworks.com/research-brief-finding-appalachias-lost-economic-decade/> and <https://pghworks.com/research-brief-orvi-fumbles-again/> .

“When organizations like the Ohio River Valley Institute develop and promote ‘studies’ they have an obligation to accurately report data and not to be manipulative with that data to serve their agenda or falsely impact potential policy and regulatory decisions,” Nobers said.

“I’ve been doing this for 34 years, and nothing has ever come close to the size and scope of the Shell cracker plant,” said Jim Cassidy, business manager for Insulators Local 2, which is based in Beaver County.

"Unless you live or work here, it's difficult to judge our progress from an academic exercise," said Beaver County Commissioner Jack Manning, the former executive director of the Beaver County Chamber of Commerce.

Cassidy estimates there are 1,100 of his union members currently on the job site. “It’s been a blessing,” he said.

The numbers bear that out. In the years before Shell purchased its site in Beaver County, the county was suffering economically compared to the region, the state, and the country. From the start of the project in 2015 until the pandemic, Beaver outperformed them all in job growth, wage growth, and GDP, sometimes at two or three times the rate.

### Job Growth

	2011-2015	2015-2019
<b>Beaver County</b>	-4.2%	8.1%
<b>Pittsburgh MSA</b>	1.3%	2.3%
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	2.8%	4.1%
<b>U.S.</b>	7.8%	6.2%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages; <https://www.bls.gov/cew/downloadable-data-files.htm>, County High-Level

### Gross Domestic Product (Size of the economy)

	2011-2015	2015-2019
<b>Beaver County</b>	-9.2%	10.8%
<b>Pittsburgh MSA</b>	8.8%	8.2%
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	7.1%	4.9%
<b>U.S.</b>	9.4%	9.4%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, datasets CAGDP8 and SAGDP8N, <https://apps.bea.gov/itable/itable.cfm?ReqID=70&step=>

## Growth in the Average Weekly Wage

	2011-2015	2015 Avg. Wage	2015-2019	2019 Avg. Wage
<b>Beaver County</b>	9.2%	\$810	26.4%	\$1,024
<b>Pittsburgh MSA</b>	12.6%	\$1,019	9.8%	\$1,119
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	10.9%	\$1,004	10.2%	\$1,106
<b>U.S.</b>	10.2%	\$1,018	11.9%	\$1,139

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages; <https://www.bls.gov/cew/downloadable-data-files.htm>, County High-Level

The county's manufacturing base expanded in 2019, growing for the third year in a row after shrinking in seven of the previous nine years.

The county's economic expansion has occurred even as the population decreased by 3.9% between 2010 and 2019. Two-thirds of that population loss came from deaths outpacing births, not from people leaving for other places. That is the lingering effect of the departure of young families from Beaver and other Pennsylvania counties during the decline of the steel industry in the 70s and 80s.

Kenneth J. Broadbent, business manager for Steamfitters Local 449, said the employment at the Shell project has meant more money to finance the local's Technology Center in Harmony, to construct the building and to pay for the instructors and equipment that will train new generations of steamfitters in the future.

"The Shell project is the best thing that ever happened to us, and it will continue to pay dividends for years to come," Broadbent said.