

**Belmont County Selected as First Choice for Multi-billion Dollar Natural Gas Cracker Plant**

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BELMONT COUNTY -A Thai energy corporation has selected Belmont County, OH as the number one choice for the construction of a multi-billion dollar ethane cracker plant.

During a press conference on Wednesday, Belmont County Commissioners joined by state government officials announced that PTT Global Chemical (PTTGC), Thailand's largest petrochemical business, and Marubeni Corporation had chosen Belmont County over several other sites in West Virginia and Pennsylvania.

For nearly two years, PTTGC and Marubeni have considered project sites across the Utica and Marcellus shale region. JobsOhio, the private non-profit corporation designed to drive creation and capital investment in Ohio, has worked with the companies throughout this time and and led the effort to move the project forward in Ohio.

Ohio Gov. John Kasich (R) calls the announcement one step closer to a major economic investment in eastern Ohio.

"There is more work ahead before final decisions on this project are made, but I know our Ohio team will do everything we can to bring it to fruition," Kasich said. "We are excited about the possibility of working with companies of the caliber of PTTGC Global and Marubeni. A project of this size can help lift the region forever."

If constructed, the ethane cracker would utilize ethane extracted from the region's Marcellus and Utica shale formations. The facility would then "crack" the ethane into ethylene, which is used as a basis for plastics and resins contained in everyday items such as food and product packaging, textiles and pharmaceuticals.

These facilities are typically located in the Gulf Coast region and a plant in Ohio could essentially cut down transportation costs for many manufacturers in the area that use petrochemicals originating from natural gas liquids.

Congressman Bill Johnson (R-Marietta) believes the possible construction is a potential game changer for Eastern Ohio.

"I share in this excitement and I look forward to working with PTTGC Global and Marubeni, Governor Kasich, and JobsOhio, and will do everything in my power to convince them that their instincts are right," Johnson said. "Ohio is truly the heart of America's energy renaissance."

Belmont County Commissioner Mark Thomas said the project would create "thousands of construction jobs, then hundreds of permanent jobs," within the county.

With a site now selected, PTTGC and Marubeni will take the next 12-16 months to complete the detailed engineering design and permitting at the Ohio site.