



General Health System
 Akron 43001-91300 9
 Summit 43001-91300 6
 Akron 43001-91300 7
 Akron 43001-91300 4
 Goodness-Tins & Rubber Co.

CRAIN'S CLEVELAND BUSINESS

YOU KNOW THE POWER OF THE BOOK OF LISTS...
 now discover *Crain's* other data products.
 Crain's weekly lists are available for purchase. Starting at \$15

TO PURCHASE DATA

SITE SEARCH:



Welcome! [update profile](#) | [logout](#)



Text Size: [A](#) [A](#) [A](#)

[THIS WEEK'S ISSUE](#) [NEWS](#) [BLOGS](#) [SHALE](#) [CRAIN'S AWARDS](#) [LISTS & DIRECTORIES](#) [MULTIMEDIA](#) [EVENTS](#) [SERVICES](#) [ADVERTISE](#)

Tuesday, December 3, 2013



[Home](#) | [News](#) | [Magazine](#) | [Blogs](#) | [Video](#) | [Advertise](#)

Seeking professional help

The Utica shale is creating jobs that go beyond transient rigworkers and truck drivers. It might be helping to reverse Ohio's brain drain by giving engineers and other professionals a reason to live in the Buckeye State.



Todd and Allison Wheaton were happy to find shale jobs in their fields and in their home state.

By **Chrissy Kadleck**
 4:30 am, June 10, 2013

Jobs: the four-letter word most projected, coveted and uttered alongside the promise of Ohio's shale economy.

Not the flash-in-the-pan positions that transport temporary workers here for a few months, but rather real, sustainable, well-paying jobs here to stay in the Buckeye State. Those are an economic development dream come true for legions of workers, cash-strapped cities and townships and dogged city officials.

They're being created too; perhaps in somewhat indefinable fits and starts so far, but companies are coming to eastern Ohio. They are opening offices and hiring workers from this area, while also attracting others to relocate here permanently – and fueling an expectant oil and gas industry.

Take CESO, Inc., an established civil engineering and surveying firm out of Dayton. The company opened a Canton office about two years ago with a few people from their southwestern Ohio headquarters.

"Last year was a real growth year for us and now we have 38 people here," said Steve Olson, vice president and head of the Canton office, adding that 25 people were hired in 2012. The firm is currently engaged in projects involving road evaluation and improvement, the placement, design and access of drilling pads, as well as route development and design work for pipelines and fuel delivery stations.

"We are continuing to grow and add people but we are definitely committed to long-term sustainability," Mr. Olson said. "We're diversifying both in our client base and in our service lines... so we aren't just staffing up for oil and gas."

About 80% of CESO's Canton work force is from the Cleveland-Akron-Canton-Youngstown area, including Mr. Olson, an architect who was previously a principal at Richard Bowen & Associates, where he worked on national retail accounts. He's been in the Cleveland area for 12 years and was enticed to change gears in his career and "reinvent" himself to participate in the shale economy.

"Everyone is hoping the sustainability of the shale play is as predicted. A number of us have left previous careers and joined forces because we believe in the opportunity," he said. "We are very encouraged by the drilling results and everything we have been hearing about the interest level from large national companies."

Another engineering firm, Lancaster, Pa.-based Rettew, opened its North Canton office in the fall of 2011. Like CESO, it's been growing fast and has so far hired 35 employees.

"The majority of hires have been Ohio local residents," said Rob Lauriello, vice president at Rettew, though he also said that the company has had some existing employees transfer from its Pennsylvania offices.

"The oil and gas industry has brought tremendous opportunity for job growth in Ohio. The industry provides positions at all levels, from oil field workers to manufacturing positions to professionals. The positive economic impact to Ohio will be felt for decades," Mr. Lauriello predicts.

And even though the energy industry was the catalyst for Rettew to open its Ohio office, "other business development opportunities have arisen to serve clients throughout the locale, such as with our land development, transportation, or municipal engineering capabilities," he said. "These projects and prospects will likely lead to more job growth in our Canton office over time."

Any job projections are dependent on the pace of the oil and gas industry in Ohio, Mr. Lauriello said, but Rettew's strategy is to have about 60 people in the office and expand its industry base.

While there will be plenty of rig workers that come to Ohio to help drill the Utica shale — workers who might also move on when their rig goes to another play — companies such as Rettew and CESO show that there's ample job growth for professionals as well.

THE WHEATONS

In fact, the Utica is even luring some talent back to the Buckeye State. Take Todd and Allison Wheaton, environmental scientists based in Rettew's Canton office, who are married to each other and the shale industry.

The couple, each of whom were raised in Ohio and educated at Kent State University, left the area in January 2009 after struggling to find work. They saw the opportunity booming around the Marcellus shale in the Pittsburgh area.

"It was a chance for us both to work in a field we enjoyed. We never intended to leave Ohio, and had planned to move back to be closer to our families as soon as we could both find a decent opportunity to do so," said Mr. Wheaton, 30, a native of North Canton. "Working in the Marcellus Shale Play in southwestern Pennsylvania is in many ways similar to what I see in the development of the Utica Shale here in eastern Ohio. The main difference I see here in Ohio is the less intense regulations, which leads to a much faster pace of development. It's not uncommon to see a soybean field transformed into an active well pad with a drill rig in place with a two-to three-week timeframe, shortly followed by pipelines to move the extracted gas to market."

Other similarities to the Marcellus Shale development are the massive influx of out-of-state workers, he said.

"I know I was overwhelmed by the amount of Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Arkansas license plates I originally saw showing up in Pennsylvania. After experiencing this in Pennsylvania I was not as surprised when I saw this migration into eastern Ohio as the shale jobs opened up here," he said.

Mrs. Wheaton, 28 and a native of Wadsworth, said that during the three-and-a-half-year span in Pennsylvania the couple worked for three different environmental consulting firms — together — and gained "invaluable on-the-job experience which led us to finding a great opportunity in Ohio when the Utica Shale began to take off."

"Moving back to the area was always a goal for us, and it has meant a great deal to both of us to be able to work and raise a family in Northeast Ohio. Both of our families could not be happier having us close by again," she said, adding that they are expecting a baby boy this July. "Typically, we don't see a lot of married couples working together in this industry. For us, it's sort of become a centerpiece for our marriage because we've been working together for so long and it just works. I like to think we push each other in ways that make us individually better."

They agree that there's nothing better than working in your own "backyard."

"It has been a great experience working in Ohio again. This is where I grew up, and with so many out-of-towners coming to Ohio for work, I am proud to say this is my home and I'm doing my part to see that its environmental resources are protected," she said. "I think it's important to have a voice in our community and to let people know we are here."



RYAN MASTOWSKI

Others are moving here from out of state, but becoming full-fledged Ohioans, such as southwest Pennsylvania native Ryan Mastowski. He seized an opportunity to relocate to Rettew's office in North Canton and to help train and develop local staff for its sister company, Rettew Flowback Inc. (RFI), which manages the water treatment needs of shale oil and gas exploration.

"After discussing the opportunity with my wife -- fiancée at the time -- we agreed to move to the Wadsworth area to start our new lives together," he said. "The opportunities in the Utica Play and the ability to help train local staff are what made me want to head back to Ohio."

Mr. Mastowski, 28, is the site manager for RFI's water treatment division in Ohio.

"To operate our treatment unit, we hired 16 local employees -- 30 percent of whom were returning military veterans -- who were trained by our staff who cut their teeth in the Marcellus, bringing our collective experience to Ohio while still growing a local workforce," he said. "As our business in the Utica continues to grow, our local staff has been promoted from within to reduce our out-of-state workers in Ohio and further develop our business."

When Mr. Mastowski first came to the area, he was commuting and staying in hotels, he said.

"In 2012, we found a local property owner in the area of our job site and rented a great house from him in Carrollton for several of our staff to use for the project," he said.

Then he and his wife started looking for a place to live and decided they want to be closer to Cleveland and narrowed the search to the Akron area.

The pair settled on the Wadsworth area and decided to build their first home together with Ryan Homes. Their home was completed in August and the couple moved in that month.

"My wife is not working in the industry, but she was quickly able to find a job in the community. The area has all of the amenities you could ever need, while still retaining the small, local businesses that we like to shop at," he said.

"While leaving your home is never easy, the communities we live and work in have been wonderful and we continue to explore the area and find new local attractions to visit."



MATT HAMMER

When Matt Hammer entered the environmental consulting field in 1999, he just missed the industry heyday when jobs were easy to get .

"The job market was pretty limited for someone in my role," said Mr. Hammer, now senior project manager at Hull & Associates, Inc. in Bedford, Ohio.

That all changed in 2011, he said. There was a buzz about the Marcellus shale activity in Pennsylvania and the promise of what could be unearthed from Ohio's

Utica shale.

Suddenly he had three job offers to work in this new shale industry. In January 2012, he joined Rettew's Canton office and in September, he was recruited to join the team at Hull & Associates.

"Since I'm a native Ohioan and I grew up in Akron, what was exciting to me was that there was this whole new industry here and all this new investment, economic benefit and money, not a re-allocation, but new money coming to Ohio," said Mr. Hammer, 38. "The fact that geology was driving the bus -- and I'm a geologist -- I personally have never seen anything like it in my arena and in what I do in Ohio. That's why I wanted to be a part of it if I could."

And he was able to realize these new opportunities without uprooting his young family which includes two sets of twins, 6-year-old boys and 2-year-old girls.

He says work in the shale industry is fast-paced and rewarding.

"It's value-added and a part of the process of bringing something to market. It feels like you are producing and not taking away from the economy," he said. "Decisions are made quickly in the shale gas world. You have to be able to be confident and secure in your opinions. You feel more like a consultant than just filling out forms. In the environmental world, you check a lot of boxes."

The new jobs coming to Ohio have positively impacted the opportunities for environmental consultants in and out of the industry, he said.

"For someone with my background in this arena, the job market is a lot better because of shale gas, whether you are doing shale gas or not, because it's pulling people into shale gas which then leaves openings in other areas in environmental and solid waste," Mr. Hammer said. "For the folks in the early to mid-stage of their career, we can probably ride this out. This is our boom."

Reader Comments

Be the first to comment!

Readers are solely responsible for the content of the comments they post here. Comments are subject to the site's [terms and conditions of use](#) and do not necessarily reflect the opinion or approval of Crain's Cleveland Business. Readers whose comments violate the terms of use may have their comments removed or all of their content blocked from viewing by other users without notification. Comments may be used in the print edition at editorial discretion.

REGISTERED USERS

Log In Now

E-mail:

Password:

[Forgot your password?](#)

NEW USERS

Current Subscriber?

- Enter your subscriber number and update your account for unrestricted access

Not a Subscriber?

- Register here for restricted access and to sign up for news alerts
- Subscribe now for unrestricted access

 [Subscribe](#)  [Print](#)  [E-mail](#)

Home

[Subscription Center](#)
[E-Newsletters](#)
[RSS](#)
[Facebook](#)
[LinkedIn](#)
[Twitter](#)
[Advertise](#)

[Crain's Media Kit](#)
[Newstand Locations](#)
[2013 Editorial Calendar](#)
[2014 Editorial Calendar](#)

This Week's Issue

[This Week's Issue](#)
[Weekly Issue PDFs](#)

News

[Breaking news](#)
[Manufacturing](#)
[Health Care](#)
[Financial/Legal](#)
[Government/Nonprofit](#)

Features

[Archer Awards](#)
[30th Anniversary](#)
[CFO of the Year](#)
[CIO of the Year](#)
[CLE2030](#)
[Euclid Avenue](#)
[Forty Under 40](#)
[In-House and General Counsel](#)
[Health Care Heroes](#)

[HR/Staffing News](#)
[Ohio Energy](#)
[Real Estate](#)
[Small Business](#)
[Technology](#)

[Health Care Innovators](#)
[Medical Mart & Convention Center](#)
[NorTech Innovation Awards](#)
[Crain's Shale Event Series](#)
[Who to Watch](#)
[Who's Who in Business](#)
[Who's Who in Law](#)
[Women of Note](#)
[West 25th](#)

Resources

[Archives](#)
[Buy and Sell a business](#)
[Classified Ads](#)
[Custom Publishing](#)
[Editorials/Opinions](#)
[Events Calendar](#)
[House Calls](#)
[LoopNet Property Search](#)
[MBA Guide](#)
[Multimedia](#)
[Podcasts](#)
[Photo Galleries](#)
[Recent Poll Results](#)
[Stocks of local interest](#)
[Webinars](#)
[White Papers](#)

Lists/Directories

[Crain's Lists Online](#)
[Purchase Book of Lists](#)
[Bioscience Directory](#)
[Economic Development Organizations Directory](#)
[Executive Search Firms & Staffing Firms Directory](#)
[Food Economy Directory](#)
[Health Care Directory](#)
[Minority-Owned Business Directory](#)
[Ohio MBA Directory](#)
[Women-Owned Business Directory](#)

Events

[Local Business Events](#)
[Submit Your Events](#)
[Coming Crain Events](#)

Affiliates

[Crain Publications](#)

Use of editorial content without permission is strictly prohibited. All rights Reserved
[Crain's Links](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)