

DATE: April 18, 2011

NEWS MEDIA CONTACT
Jennifer Thompson (202) 406-0815

Pipeline report: The \$12 billion gas treatment plant

The Office of Federal Coordinator for an Alaska natural gas pipeline added another in-depth report to its website today. Focusing on the \$12 billion gas treatment plant that would be needed at Prudhoe Bay, Bill White continues the office's effort to explain complex aspects of the gas pipeline project for the public.

This latest report looks at the massive gas treatment plant that would be built on the North Slope. White explains what the plant would do, how much ground would be covered by the 270,000 tons of modules that will make up the complex, and the costs associated with building the treatment plant to remove carbon dioxide and other impurities from the gas stream for the pipeline.

"The vast North American pipeline network is choosy about the gas it handles. Different gas fields and different pipeline companies all feed into the network, and for the system to hum every molecule of gas must be nearly identical in chemistry to every other molecule," the report says as it describes the purpose of the treatment plant. "Like a picky kid who plucks pepperoni from the school-lunch pizza before gobbling it down, the gas pipeline network refuses to ingest gas that has more than a trace of impurities."

"There are many steps natural gas must go through as it is processed. It needs to be cleaned, chilled and compressed before it can be shipped to the local distribution facilities," Persily said. "This report looks at the gas treatment plant that will take the gas through these steps. Building the plant isn't an easy task. It is nearly double the size of the largest such plants around the world and will cost roughly \$12 billion."

Look to the OFC website, www.arcticgas.gov, for this week's report on the gas treatment plant and subscribe if you are interested in receiving notification of subsequent articles, which generally will be posted every Monday.

Future topics will include how other interstate gas pipelines have been developed in recent years, details of the federal loan guarantees for an Alaska line, and the federally required project development consultations with Alaska Native tribes.

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