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From the Pittsburgh Business Times:

<http://www.bizjournals.com/pittsburgh/news/2017/02/23/yablonsky-api-sowing-seeds-of-sustainable.html>

View Point

Yablonsky: API sowing seeds of sustainable workforce

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For several years, civic leaders have worried about the region's ability to build a globally competitive workforce. To that end, the work of the Appalachia Partnership Initiative has been a model worthy of attention.

The partnership was created three years ago by [Chevron Corp.](#), the [Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation](#), [The Grable Foundation](#), [RAND Corp.](#) and [Allegheny Conference on Community Development](#). Our aim is to develop a new generation of energy and advanced-manufacturing workers across the tri-state region.

Next month, API will release a community report to take stock of what we have accomplished to date, and what's ahead. We invite Pittsburgh region business leaders to take note.

API has invested millions of dollars and other resources in education and training programs. Chevron alone has dedicated \$20 million to the effort, its largest social investment partnership initiative in the U.S.

This investment answers the challenge set in 2012 after an Allegheny Conference regional workforce analysis identified more than a dozen key energy and advanced manufacturing occupations that would be in high demand but hard to fill because of a lack of skilled workers. Further, a 2014 report commissioned by Chevron found little understanding — especially in rural areas — of the importance of STEM education to career success.

These findings are underscored by [Shell Pennsylvania Chemical's](#) construction of a world-class ethane cracker in Beaver County that will need an estimated 600 full-time employees once it's fully operational.

But this is not just an energy-sector concern — quite the contrary. The key to our region's continued success is addressing the need for workers with STEM skills across multiple industries and occupations, including advanced manufacturing. Building those skills will help men and women remain employable despite the ups and downs of any single industry.

API's K-12 STEM education programs are helping to get students engaged early with initiatives such as:

Project Lead the Way, which provides professional development for activity-based STEM instructional approaches, engineering, computer and biomedical science curricula

Creation of fab labs (fabrication labs for 3-D printing, laser cutting and other advanced manufacturing tools and technologies for students) at the [Carnegie Science Center](#) and Intermediate Unit 1 in Grindstone, Fayette County

Creation of mobile fab labs that serve Pittsburgh neighborhoods as well as rural communities

The Carnegie Science Center's Student Energy Summit and Grand Slam Science on the Road

The [Children's Museum of Pittsburgh's](#) Explore Making program

For those soon to enter or already in the workforce, API supports:

ShaleNET, a partnership among employers and four technical colleges in Ohio and West Virginia and at Pennsylvania's [Westmoreland Community College](#) and Pennsylvania Technical College

Southwest Training Services' employment services for dislocated coal workers

The Energy Innovation Center's Energy Safety Passport safety training program



Dennis Yablonsky is CEO of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development.

Seven Catalyst Connection programs that train high school students for jobs at regional advanced manufacturers

Building a skilled workforce is the regional challenge and opportunity of our time. I invite all of the Pittsburgh region's business leaders to take this as an invitation and call to action to join us in preparing a globally competitive workforce that can sustain our prosperity for generations to come.