**Permit requests move plans for Wood County cracker plant forward**

The company studying the feasibility of building an ethane cracker facility in Wood County has applied for two permits. The Appalachian Shale Cracker Enterprise LLC ([ASCENT](http://www.governor.wv.gov/media/pressreleases/2013/Pages/Odebrecht-to-Explore-Appalachian-Industrial-Investment.aspx)) has submitted two environmental permitting documents to the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection. The air quality permit and the application to evaluate the property under state’s Voluntary Remediation Program represent an administrative step forward in the study process.

ASCENT is a subsidiary of Odebrecht, based in Brazil. In November 2013, Odebrecht announced plans to consider building a cracker plant and three polyethylene plants in Wood County. Shortly thereafter, the company purchased 363 acres near Parkersburg.

A cracker plant breaks natural gas into valuable components such as ethane, methane, propane and butane. Ethane can be converted into ethylene, a key ingredient in consumer and industrial products.

If the company decides to undertake the project ASCENT is expected to generate thousands of jobs in construction, hundreds of jobs in operating the completed plant and hundreds more in chemical and manufacturing plants that use the separated components.