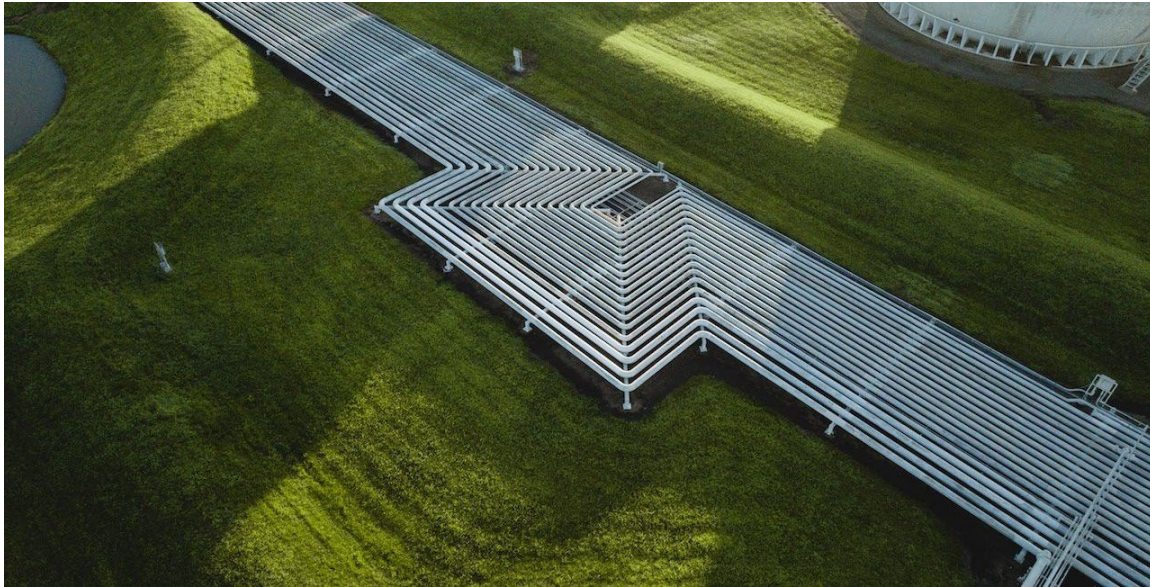


Every Molecule Counts: Fueling America's Next 250 Years

By Pierce Norton, President and CEO, ONEOK



On July 4, our nation will celebrate 250 years of independence. It is a moment to honor the generations whose courage, vision and perseverance helped shape this country and whose example continues to inspire us today. Equally, it is a moment to consider the future we are building for those who come after us.

From the American Revolution to the Shale Revolution, energy has played a central role in America's independence story. It has helped power communities, electrify cities and fuel this nation through defining moments in history.

However, oil and gas and their many byproducts aren't a given. They are products of American ingenuity and premiere infrastructure. Reliable energy infrastructure has long been part of America's strength, and it remains essential to the country's economic security, competitiveness and quality of life.



Figure 1: Visiting our Permian expansion initiatives at our Lobo natural gas processing plant outside of Pecos, Texas.

Infrastructure and Independence

In October, ONEOK will celebrate 120 years as a company, and over that time, our company has evolved alongside America's energy needs. What has not changed is the responsibility we carry: to operate safely, invest wisely and connect the energy people depend on with the communities and markets that need it.

Today, the U.S. is the world's largest oil and gas producer, an achievement that reflects what a connected, reliable energy system delivers for our economy and our nation – and ONEOK is proud of the critical role our over 6,000 employees and our 60,000-mile pipeline network and facilities play in delivering this energy today.



Figure 2: At ONEOK's West Tulsa facility, disciplined operations and integrated infrastructure help ensure energy moves seamlessly from the wellhead through refining and onto the broader system, reliably positioning supply for its next destination beyond the basin.

But sustaining America's competitive energy advantage depends not only on what we produce but also on whether we can move it. That is why sustained investment in midstream infrastructure matters. For example, the Interstate Natural Gas Association of America Foundation projects that North America will require more than \$1 trillion in new midstream capital investment to meet projected demand through 2052¹, including 37,000 miles of new natural gas transmission pipelines. That is why permitting modernization to attract capital-efficient growth across our industry matter more than ever. As I have said before, every pipeline we place in the ground is a promise to deliver vital energy when and where it is needed most. And no matter where you look, the data tells us we are going to need a lot more.

¹ [What They Are Saying About the INGAA Foundation Midstream Report: More than \\$1 Trillion in Pipeline Infrastructure Needed to Maintain U.S. Natural Gas Advantage - INGAA](#)



Figure 3: Refined products storage tanks and ancillary infrastructure at our Kansas City, Missouri, facility are critical to providing uninterrupted fuel supply across our contiguous systems for the transportation and agricultural sectors, among others.

Smarter Systems, Smarter Future

"Purposeful innovation begins when we see an opportunity to improve and believe there has to be a better way."

I share that conviction with our employees, and I see it embodied in their work because it captures what is unfolding across our industry. Cutting-edge technology is actively reshaping the energy sector, from real-time monitoring and smart pigging to advanced data analytics, artificial intelligence and automation. Consider that the U.S. operates more than 3 million miles of pipelines every day (equivalent to the number of miles of paved roads in the United States). Operating a system of that scale safely and efficiently requires a continuous-improvement mindset. And the midstream sector is rising to that challenge by integrating tools that strengthen pipeline integrity and allow operators to make faster, better-informed decisions.

By challenging ourselves to think differently, we are enabling the kind of deliberate technology adoption that will define the next chapter of 21st century energy security. But reaching that end goal means continuing to invest in more flexible and more integrated systems that allow us to maximize the value each molecule offers.



Figure 4: Outside Greater Houston at ONEOK's Mont Belvieu, Texas, complex, scale and precision come together to separate and prepare NGLs for market, extending a connected system that continues to the coast, where export capacity currently under construction in Texas City will further position barrels for efficient delivery to global customers.

Passing the Torch, Purpose Prevails

We are able to think about tomorrow because others came before us and laid the groundwork first. That is something I believe deeply, and it speaks to the various generations whose skilled hands build and maintain the assets and systems millions of people rely on.

Today, the U.S. energy sector employs roughly 8.5 million Americans, accounting for 5.4% of all jobs nationwide. These are the faces of energy that are unseen, the people who brave the elements and work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to deliver the energy that powers modern life. Their perseverance and determination are the same qualities that have defined American progress in our sector at every turn, from the wildcatters who first discovered oil to the innovators advancing our industry today.

That is the torch we now have the privilege to pass on. To the next generation of people who will build, operate, improve and lead this industry forward: the world is going to need more of what you bring to the table. Access to reliable energy is what allows families to thrive and communities to grow. It is a critical means by which we preserve the spirit of independence through national security our country was founded on. The people we train, the infrastructure we build and the standard of excellence we set today will shape America's energy future for the next 250 years. So let's make every molecule count!

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