

# PETROLEUM/GEOLOGY ENERGY PROGRAM INITIATED



**Judie Perkowski** *Dix Communications*

**N**EW CONCORD — Muskingum University recently announced a new major program for a bachelor's degree in petroleum geology beginning this fall. The new major is designed for students interested in entering the energy industry.

The four new classes will add to Muskingum's current majors in geology, environmental sciences, conservation science and earth science. Minors in earth science and geology are also offered.

Head of the geology department, Associate Professor Dr. Stephen Van Horn, said his staff began talking about a petroleum geology major last year, after an email from a friend, who works in the oil and gas industry, saying that because of the discovery of the huge Utica shale play in our area, serious thought should be given to offering a program at Muskingum to accommodate students who are planning a career in oil and gas.

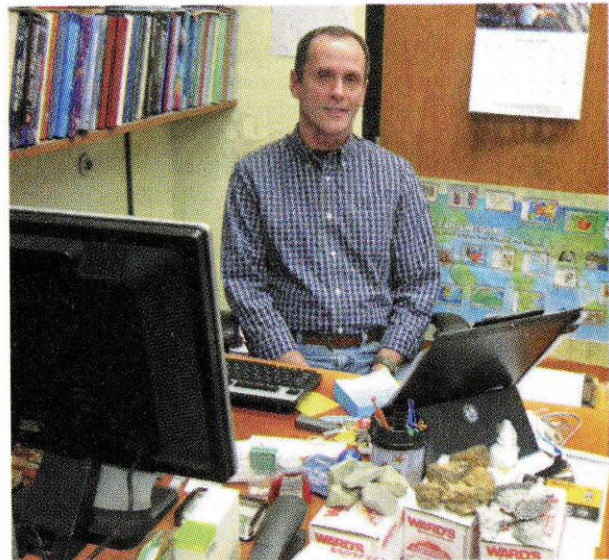
Although Muskingum has offered a geology program for about 15 years, which has in recent years shown a steady growth, it did not incorporate subjects necessary for a position as a petroleum geologist.

Van Horn went online to the American Association of Petroleum Geologists website and looked up requirements for a new degree program. One year later, Muskingum is on board to provide the credentials for students who have set their sights on the exciting, evolving and lucrative oil and gas industry.

"The main difference in the petroleum geology program is that it requires true field work ... It requires a senior research project, where the students attends another school for six weeks mapping and reporting on the project," said Van Horn. "It's fun, it's an adventure. But it is also getting down in the trenches, literally."

The 43 credit hour petroleum geology program includes all fundamental courses of the geology major, with the addition of four new courses: Introduction to Well Logging (3 credit hours); Sedimentary Petrology (3 credit hours); Petroleum Geology (3 credit hours), and Subsurface Geology (3 credit hours).

"We feel it is possible to support the geology, earth science and petroleum geology majors with our current staff," said Van Horn.



Associate Professor Dr. Stephen Van Horn in his rock-filled office at Muskingum University in New Concord, as he announced the new major petroleum geology degree program, which will begin this fall.

He says he "still has the passion for rocks." He is giving this addition to the geology department a definite thumbs up, but says he still keeps his eyes on the ground.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates employment for geoscientists is projected to grow 16 percent from now until 2022, faster than the average for all occupations.

Van Horn, a native Pennsylvanian, graduated with a bachelor's degree in biology and geology from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and earned his master's degree at the University of Missouri-Columbia. As a grad student, he worked during the summer for Exxon. After graduation he worked for Shell in New Orleans, onshore and offshore. A few years later he earned his Ph.D in Geo-Science at the University of Connecticut, and was subsequently hired by Muskingum in 1999.

Van Horn is also faculty executive secretary — a liaison between Muskingum faculty and administration — and assistant director of the Regional Planning Center. He and his wife, Debra, have two children and reside in New Concord.

For more information about the petroleum geology degree program, or any other degree, visit [www.muskingum.edu](http://www.muskingum.edu) or call the admission office at (740) 826-8211.