

Global Chemical Industry Poised for Strong Growth, Creating New Opportunities for Appalachian Manufacturers

New report provides a roadmap for regional manufacturers to capitalize on a \$6 trillion industry.

PITTSBURGH, PA, UNITED STATES, April 14, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The global chemical industry, which serves as the foundation for the manufacturing sector, is creating new supply chain opportunities for manufacturers. A [new report](#) from the Energy & Manufacturing in Appalachia (EMA) initiative examines how Appalachian manufacturers can support this industry by supplying materials, equipment, and services across a complex and growing chemical value chain.



The EMA initiative is led by [Catalyst Connection](#), southwestern Pennsylvania's economic development organization, along with the following regional partners: Alliance for Manufacturing and Technology (AMT), Innovative Manufacturers Center, Magnet, Manufacturers Resource Center, MANTEC, Maryland MEP, Northeastern PA IRC, Northwestern PA IRC, Reimagine Appalachia, and West Virginia University.

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Petra Mitchell, President and CEO of Catalyst Connection

“Few sectors have the reach of the chemical industry, which touches nearly every corner of the economy,” said Petra Mitchell, President and CEO of Catalyst Connection. “From construction to advanced electronics, Appalachia's manufacturers can and will supply this complex market, meeting growing demand for advanced materials and

sustainable solutions.”

Global Demand Driving Growth in the Chemical Industry

The chemical industry represents one of the largest sectors of the global economy, valued at more than \$6 trillion in 2024, with steady growth projected in the coming years. In the United States, the chemical market is expected to reach \$1.22 trillion by 2032, supported by rising domestic manufacturing and global demand for advanced materials.

This growth is being driven by demand across a wide range of industries, including construction, automotive, electronics, and energy. Increasing demand for materials used in data centers, battery production, and lightweight manufacturing is creating new opportunities. The United States, and Appalachia in particular, benefits from abundant natural gas and petrochemical feedstocks, giving domestic production a built-in cost advantage.

The industry is rapidly evolving. Investment is shifting toward specialty chemicals that support high-performance applications, while companies are adopting more sustainable production methods, advanced automation, and data-driven operations. However, high interest rates and geopolitical uncertainty are slowing capital investment decisions and hindering continued growth.

Chemical Supply Chain Spans Multiple Manufacturing Sectors

The chemical industry operates as a multi-stage supply chain, transforming raw materials into thousands of intermediate and finished products used across the economy. The sector is broadly divided into four segments:

- Basic chemicals, including high-volume materials such as petrochemicals and industrial gases
- Specialty chemicals designed for specific applications, including advanced materials and performance resins
- Agricultural chemicals such as fertilizers and crop protection products
- Consumer products, including cleaning compounds and personal care goods

With each segment requiring different manufacturing capabilities, from large-scale production to precision engineering and research-driven development.

Manufacturing and Supply Chain Opportunities

EMA's Chemical Industry Supply Chain report highlights opportunities for small and medium-sized manufacturers to support the chemical sector, including:

- Industrial machinery and equipment used in chemical processing, polymer production, and materials manufacturing
- Engineering and technical services for plant design, system integration, and regulatory

compliance

- Warehousing, storage, and specialized logistics for handling bulk and hazardous materials
- Research and development services supporting materials innovation and process

optimization

- Fabricated components, piping systems, and control technologies used in chemical production facilities

[Read the full report](#) and watch a webinar recording on the key insights.

About Catalyst Connection

Catalyst Connection is a southwestern Pennsylvania economic development organization dedicated to serving manufacturers. For more than 35 years, Catalyst has operated with a focus on powering potential through delivering technical assistance and management consulting services and developing long-standing partnerships across the region. Catalyst maintains a deeply held commitment to modernizing manufacturing and enabling opportunity across business enterprises, individuals, and throughout communities.

Catalyst Connection is supported, in part, by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development and the National Institute of Standards and Technology Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NIST MEP). As such, we are an affiliate of the Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Center (IRC) and the MEP National Network in southwestern Pennsylvania.

About the Energy & Manufacturing in Appalachia Initiative

The Energy & Manufacturing in Appalachia (EMA) initiative provides technical assistance and business support to small and medium manufacturers and enterprises in 156 counties of Maryland, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia seeking to expand business, production, and jobs in the energy supply chains or to be more energy efficient.

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