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UT researchers release new Fayetteville Shale report

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Researchers at the Bureau of Economic Geology at the University of Texas at Austin, who earlier released a comprehensive study of the Barnett Shale, on Thursday said they estimate the Fayetteville Shale in Arkansas has about 38 trillion cubic feet of natural gas that can be recovered with current technology. At a price of \$4 per 1,000 cubic feet, about 18 trillion cubic feet of that would be economically recoverable, although the production outlook is "only moderately sensitive to natural gas price," the study says. At the \$4 price, which is just under current futures prices, the field has likely peaked or is about to peak and will slowly decline as fewer new wells are drilled. The study, funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, looked at production histories for all wells in the field drilled between 2005 and 2011.

BEG researchers divided the Fayetteville into six tiers by production quality. (They did the same in the Barnett, using 10 tiers.) "The higher productivity tiers are, not surprisingly, more developed," said co-principal investigator Svetlana Ikonnikova, an energy economist at the BEG. "The lower tiers remain uneconomic at almost any foreseeable gas price." The BEG said it plans to complete assessments this year of the Haynesville Shale, which extends into parts of Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas, and the Marcellus Shale in the Appalachians. That will be followed by "a study of U.S. shale oil reserves, all funded by the Sloan Foundation,"

-- Jim Fuquay

Section: Barnett Shale

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