

Wayne Vanderhoof

President, RJR Safety Inc.

Education: Associate degree, CADD - architectural design, Pittsburgh Technical Institute; B.S., occupational safety and health, Columbia Southern University



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Experience: Personal safety coordinator, Belcan Engineering; CADD designer, project coordinator - safety, E.S. Technologies Design & Management Inc.; designer, Bayer - Hennecke Machinery Group; operator/laborer extrusion department, operations safety coordinator, training coordinator, Washington Penn Plastic Co. Inc.; safety consultant, Integrated Health & Safety Solutions Inc.; safety professional/president, RJR Safety Inc.; chairperson, Pennsylvania Independent Oil and Gas Association safety committee

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After the oil and gas boom began in western Pennsylvania, Wayne Vanderhoof began helping companies provide safety training to their new employees – and formed a

company around it, RJR Safety Inc. in Claysville.

“Up in this area, industry recognized early on there were many new employees with no real experience in oil and gas,” said Vanderhoof, president of RJR Safety. “Since things really started to pick up on a large basis in 2008, the safety emphasis has increased significantly. The training has gotten a lot better as well.”

Vanderhoof, a certified safety professional, has more than 25 years experience in the health and safety field. He has one employee, Melissa Heike, who has a master’s in safety sciences from Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

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Since 2008, the two have been providing safety training and consulting services to small- and medium-sized companies in the manufacturing, construction, and oil and gas industries. However, hiring in the oil and gas sector has slowed down in the past year, so Vanderhoof now provides more safety consulting services than training for new employees.

Vanderhoof also said he has begun to diversify his client base by focusing more on midstream and pipeline companies, and the manufacturing industry.

Previously, oil and gas companies accounted for 95 percent of his customers, and Vanderhoof said if he could do things differently, he would have begun to diversify sooner. He said his goal is to have his business about 50 percent to 60 percent oil and gas and the other 40 percent to 50 percent manufacturing and construction.

Although the oil and gas industry is facing increased global competition, Vanderhoof said he expects it to recover.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health also have put the oil and gas industry under more scrutiny. Vanderhoof said the consensus is that the oil and gas industry will start to grow again in the next 12 to 18 months, and hiring will increase.

“It’s not going to be an all-out boom like it was back in 2008 to 2010, but it is going to gradually ramp back up,” he said.

Vanderhoof also is an active member of several professional organizations and currently serves as the newsletter editor and website coordinator for the western Pennsylvania chapter of the American Society of Safety Engineers and chairperson of the Pennsylvania Independent Oil and Gas Association’s safety committee.

Paul Glasser is a freelance writer.