NATIONAL ENERGY TECHNOLOGY LABORATORY
MORGANTOWN, WEST VIRGINIA

NETL

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NETL's Morgantown laboratory was established in 1946 with a mission to find more efficient and cost-effective ways of gasifying coal to produce synthesis gas. Today, Morgantown researchers partner with organizations across the nation to meet the laboratory's mission to discover, integrate, and mature technology solutions to enhance the nation's energy foundation and protect the environment for future generations.

World War II sparked national interest in synthetic fuels production, leading to passage of the Synthetic Liquid Fuels Act of 1944. It was under this legislation that the Synthesis Gas Branch Experiment Station began government-sponsored, coal-gasification research at West Virginia University facilities in Morgantown, W. Va. in 1946. Administered by the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) Bureau of Mines, the 17-employee station was tasked with developing processes to produce synthesis gas from coal.

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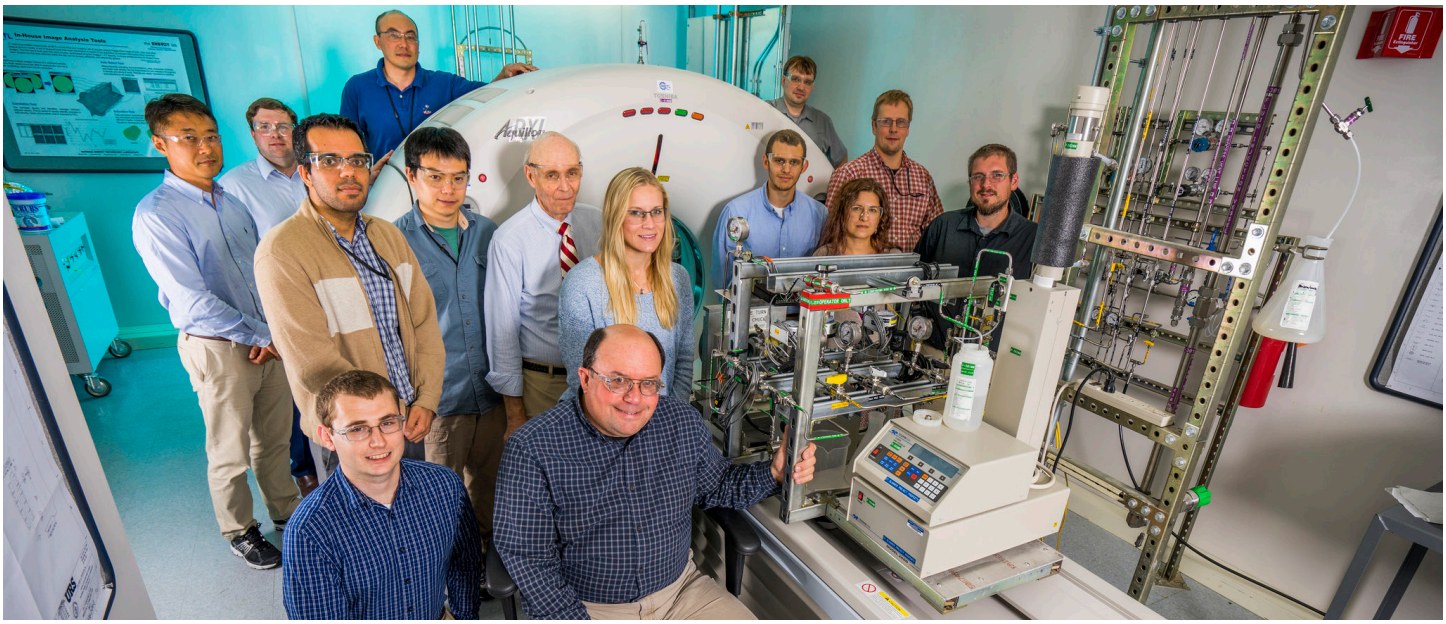

By 1954, the Morgantown laboratory had become the Appalachian Experiment Station for onsite coal research with a staff of 109 employees. Construction of the Appalachian Experiment Station, which comprised an administrative building and laboratories for the study of petroleum production and coal gasification, began on Collins Ferry Road in June 1952. The new Appalachian Experiment Station represented an important step toward consolidating ongoing investigations of petroleum, coal, and synthetic fuels into an overarching program of fossil-energy research that could help guide federal energy policy.

The 1970s brought many changes as the Appalachian Experiment Station came under the purview of the new U.S. Energy Research and Development Administration in 1975 and gained a new moniker: the Morgantown Energy Research Center (MERC). Together with sister Energy Research Centers in Bartlesville (Oklahoma), and Pittsburgh, MERC began overseeing federally funded contracts for fossil energy research and development. Research areas included the development of advanced methods for cleaning coal and combustion gases, alternative methods to substitute coal for imported oil, and enhanced oil recovery to produce more domestic oil. In 1977, the center was incorporated into the newly established U.S. Department of Energy as the Morgantown Energy Technology Center (METC). The center's responsibilities included onsite research with coal, oil, and gas technologies, as well as management of millions of dollars' worth of contracts for research and development conducted by universities, private industry, and other government research institutions.

METC merged with the Pittsburgh Energy Technology Center in 1996 to form the Federal Energy Technology Center (FETC). FETC continued to strengthen existing partnerships with industry, academia, and other government organizations, and forged new ones that reinforced its role as a catalyst for moving advanced energy and environmental technologies into the marketplace.

NETL received its current designation in 1999 when the Secretary of Energy elevated FETC to become DOE's 15th national laboratory, the National Energy Technology Laboratory. This move signaled the importance of fossil fuels to the global energy economy.

As of January 2021, NETL's Morgantown laboratory is staffed with more than 630 employees and is comprised of 43 buildings, including its newest addition, the Technology Support Facility, which was completed in 2008. The building is registered with the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification with a gold rating for its energy conservation design, which includes sustainable building practices and materials, a green roof, and judicious use of natural light and lighting controls for energy efficiency. The building exemplifies NETL's commitment to environmental stewardship. Site wide, NETL's researchers continue to investigate energy technologies related to geological and environmental systems, advanced materials, energy conversion technologies, computational science and engineering, and systems engineering and analysis—all with the common goal of advancing NETL's mission to discover, integrate, and mature technology solutions to enhance the nation's energy foundation and protect the environment for future generations.