

Preface-“Natural Gas Utilization”

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The papers in this issue of Catalysis Today are based on presentations made at the Second Topical Conference on Natural Gas Utilization, March 10–14, 2002, AIChE Spring National Meeting, New Orleans, LA as well as several invited papers. The sessions were chaired by Ari Geertsema of the University of Kentucky's Center for Applied Energy Research and Ram Srivastava Hugh guthrie, Venkat Venkataraman of DOE's National Energy Technology Lab. The exchange of information at this Conference and others has stimulated new academic efforts and industrial research in the conversion of natural gas.

These papers focus on the conversion of natural gas into a range of useful products—syngas, fuels and chemicals. The most recent energy projections show that natural gas use is expected to increase more

rapidly than that of other fuels (e.g., US DOE, Energy Information Agency; http://www.eia.doe.gov/oiaf/ieo/tbl_b2.html). This, coupled with its use for the synthesis of liquid fuels and hydrogen, make natural gas utilization an important current topic.

The Editors are especially pleased that many of the leaders in this field have prepared papers for this issue. We are grateful for the efforts of each of the authors, who worked diligently to prepare their manuscripts. We trust that these papers will provide scientific information to help with the efficient use of natural gas. We are indebted to the reviewers, who undertook the challenging task of carefully analyzing each paper. We trust the issue will help stimulate more investigation and stimulate new ideas.

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