



West Virginia Surface Owners' Rights Organization

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www.wvsoro.org

For Immediate Release

April 16, 2010

Informational Meeting on Oil & Gas Drilling Set for April 22 in Upshur County

Local members for the WV Surface Owners' Rights Organization (WV SORO) have planned an informational meeting on oil and gas drilling at the Banks District Volunteer Fire Department for Thursday, April 22, 2010 starting at 6:30 PM. Dave McMahon, a public interest lawyer and an attorney co-founder of WV-SORO, will give a presentation and answer questions about leasing surface owners' rights and landowner rights with regard to seismic testing. Legislators and representatives of the Department of Highways will also be on hand to hear concerns and answer questions from members of the community. Delegate Bill Hamilton and Senator Randy White have confirmed their attendance, and members of the Upshur County Commission have been invited.

“Last year the number of wells drilled statewide last year decreased with the downturn in the economy, however activity is starting to increase particularly in areas like Upshur County where companies have a number of wells planned to the Marcellus shale formation,” commented Julie Archer, an organizer for the group.

Upshur County currently has 13 active Marcellus shale gas wells according to the WV Division of Environmental Protection's Office of Oil and Gas. However, data available at their website shows the Office has issued more than 500 permits in Upshur County over the past year. More than half of those permits, 239, were issued to Chesapeake Appalachia, LLC to drill horizontal wells in the county.

In addition to having a number of wells planned in the area, Chesapeake recently contracted with Dawson Geophysical to conduct both 2D (two dimensional) and 3D (three dimensional) testing over 80 square miles of southern Upshur and a parts of Randolph and Lewis counties.

“Recently we have been getting lots of calls from folks with questions about the seismic testing asking if they have to allow Dawson onto their land,” said Dave McMahon, WV-SORO's co-founder. “This is a massive project. If they run into an unwilling surface owner, and feel they need permission for that land, they have sued.”

Archer said that in addition to questions about seismic testing, WV-SORO knows that many area residents are concerned about the potential impacts drilling will have on water quality and quantity and that many people have complaints about damage to local roads caused by the increase in drilling activity. “We know people have lots of questions and WV-SORO is focused on educating landowners about their rights and pushing of the public policy changes needed to make these rights easier to enforce and to ensure landowners receive fair compensation for their losses and inconveniences,” she said.

There are also a number of environmental and quality of life issues associated with oil and gas drilling. These include the potential for groundwater contamination, the impact on the land (Marcellus well sites are larger and can disturb up to 5 acres each), water use (drilling and fracturing techniques being used for Marcellus wells are water intensive) and wastewater disposal. As a result, McMahon says WV-SORO encourages landowners who are considering leasing their minerals to think long term. “The money may be attractive but

they need to think about what they or future generations may want to do with the land. Most mineral owners don't know that there are usually bad provisions in leases that can and should be crossed out and that they can insist on lease add-ons or addendums that provide additional protections for their land before they sign."

Both surface and mineral owners interested in learning more about their rights are encouraged to attend Thursday's meeting. However, WV-SORO has a number of resources on its website, www.wvsoro.org. These resources include *the WV Surface Owners' Guide to Oil and Gas* which helps landowners assess their situation, outlines what rights they have and gives them step-by-step suggestions on what they should do before, during and after an oil or gas well is drilled on their property. The group also has a 'leasing' page at their website with information for those who are considering leasing their minerals and recently added a page with information about seismic testing.

Who: WV Surface Owners' Rights Organization (WV-SORO)
What: Informational Meeting on Oil and Gas Drilling
When: Thursday, April 22, 2010 at 6:30 PM
Where: Banks District Volunteer Fire Department, Rock Cave, WV
Contact: Julie Archer (304) 346-5891 or Dave McMahon (304) 415-4288

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