



West Virginia Surface Owners' Rights Organization

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www.wvsoro.org

For Immediate Release

August 18, 2010

Informational Meeting on Oil & Gas Drilling Set for September 7 in Taylor County

Delegate Mike Manypenny, County Commission candidate Mike Withers and Taylor Environmental Advocacy Membership (TEAM) are hosting an informational meeting for landowners on oil and gas drilling at the Taylor County Senior Citizen Center for Tuesday, September 7, 2010 starting at 6:30 PM. Dave McMahon, a public interest lawyer and an attorney co-founder of the WV Surface Owners' Rights Organization (WV-SORO), will give a presentation and answer questions about surface owners' rights and leasing.

McMahon said, WV-SORO understands that many West Virginia landowners are concerned about the potential impacts drilling will have on their land, as well as on water quality. The organization frequently receives calls from people with as well as questions about what they can do to protect their land prior to drilling as well as numerous complaints about damage once the drilling begins. "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," he said.

Many of these needed changes were included in the "Surface Owners' Rights Recognition Act" (H.B. 4408), which was introduced by Manypenny during the 2010 legislative session. The bill would provide additional protections for surface owners throughout West Virginia who may have oil or gas wells drilled on their property. This legislation will help ensure surface owners' rights are recognized by the drillers and prevent abuse. Manypenny believes ethical, responsible companies will be unaffected by the legislation which essentially encourages the drillers to be good neighbors.

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 the September 7 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 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.

Who: Delegate Mike Manypenny, Mike Withers, TEAM and WV-SORO
What: Informational Meeting on Oil and Gas Drilling
When: Tuesday, Sept. 7, 2010 at 6:30 PM
Where: Taylor County Senior Citizen Center, Grafton, WV
Contact: Delegate Manypenny (304) 677-0379, Mike Withers (304) 265-3750,
Beth Baldwin (TEAM), (304) 265-3095 or Julie Archer (WV-SORO), (304) 346-5891

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