

Next question, please

As industry changes, OOG spreads word about its role

By Tom Aluise

There's heightened interest these days in the duties of West Virginia's Office of Oil and Gas.

As the natural gas industry rushes to tap into the lucrative Marcellus Shale, West Virginia residents in high-yield drilling areas are wondering what's being done to guard their rights as land and mineral owners and what measures are in place to protect

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Top: Dave Belcher, inspector supervisor for the DEP's Office of Oil and Gas, answers questions from the audience during an informational meeting on natural gas drilling and exploration at West Virginia Wesleyan College in Buckhannon. Bottom: The forum was sponsored by the West Virginia University Extension Service and drew a large gathering.



It's back to business for new chief

By Tom Aluise

In 1990, the McDonough Caperton Insurance Group, looking to hire in-house counsel, plucked attorney Judy Thomas from the Charleston firm Bowles Rice McDavid Graff & Love.

"They didn't have a legal department at the time," Thomas said of McDonough Caperton, now known as Wells Fargo Insurance Services. "They hired me as their general counsel."

During her 17-year tenure with the company, Thomas acquired more than legal experience.

Not only did Thomas build McDonough Caperton's legal division from the ground up, she also formed and managed the local company's claims department as well.

Thomas found her dual law-business role to be a perfect career fit. And it was something she missed when she left Wells Fargo three years ago and returned to private practice as a litigator at Charleston's Spilman Thomas & Battle.

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Judy Thomas became the DEP's new chief of Legal Services on Nov. 1. The Charleston native was in private practice with Spilman Thomas & Battle before accepting her new position at the DEP, where she is in charge of six attorneys.

DEP offices reaching out

By Tom Aluise

Department of Environmental Protection employees around the state are collecting everything from toys to food and from stuffed animals to clothing during the holiday season.

Several DEP offices, including the Charleston headquarters, Oak Hill, Logan and Fairmont, are conducting collection drives to help the less fortunate.

In Charleston, employees are contributing to both the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program and Mountain Mission.

Toys for Tots accepts new, unwrapped toys



which are ultimately distributed to needy children in the collection area.

Mountain Mission is a non-profit, faith-based charitable organization that serves families and individuals in need in the Kanawha Valley. Last year, Mountain Mission supplied food baskets to over 900 families. Those baskets included canned

vegetables, fruit, sugar, potatoes, cranberry sauce, stuffing, breakfast cereal, candy and a 14-pound turkey.

Boxes are located throughout DEP headquarters for toy donations, as well as food contributions to Mountain Mission.

The Oak Hill office is participating in the New Haven Christmas Project, which aids less-fortunate families in the New Haven District of Fayette County. Money collected in the Oak Hill office will help area churches and other organizations set up a Christmas store at Midland Trail High School, where families can shop

for holiday gifts and clothing.

Last year, the New Haven Christmas Project helped over 1,000 children and their families.

The DEP's Logan office is involved in the Shriners Hospital Teddy Bear Drive. Last year, Logan collected close to 50 teddy bears and other stuffed animals which were delivered to hospital-bound children over the holidays.

In Fairmont, DEP employees will begin collecting donations and items for both the Marion County Humane Society and the Marion County Soup Opera on Jan. 3.

See REACHING, Page 4

Getting into that holiday spirit

Several Department of Environmental Protection and Public Employee Insurance Agency staffers took a few minutes out of their day recently to help decorate the Christmas tree in the lobby of the DEP's headquarters.

Pictured at right, DEP employees (from left) Toni Miller, Tricia Sizemore and Keith Carte put the finishing touches on the tree.



With Brent Kessinger and Sandy Kee running the show, the Office of Administration conducted its second annual Christmas Auction during its Christmas luncheon. The auction raised \$426 for the Combined Campaign. Melinda Campbell, who coordinates the Combined Campaign for the DEP, said the auction is a great way to raise money for charity and encouraged other offices to give it a try.

West Virginia Energy Efficient Appliance Rebate Program

Rebate Funds Remaining as of Dec. 5, 2010

Appliance	Funds
Clothes washers	\$13,950
Dishwashers	\$34,200
Refrigerators	\$36,200
Total	\$84,350

Rebate applications submitted
As of Dec. 5, 2010

Appliance	Rebates
Refrigerators	\$876,600
Clothes washers	\$405,925
Dishwashers	\$268,425
Freezers	\$11,075
Air conditioners	\$8,040
Total	\$1.5 million



Rebate program funds dwindling for state residents

By Tom Aluise

Six months into its first year, the West Virginia Energy Efficient Appliance Rebate Program is motoring along better than some expected.

“Other states went through their rebate funds in 48 hours,” said Greg Adolfson, sustainability officer for the Department of Environmental Protection. “But you’re talking about states that have huge populations and five to 10 times more money.”

West Virginia’s rebate program began with \$1.6 million in its coffers and had roughly \$84,350 remaining for ENERGY STAR®-qualified clothes washers, dishwashers and refrigerators as of Dec. 5. All rebate funds for freezers and room air conditioners have been reserved by consumers.

“I think it has gone better than I expected,” said Adolfson, who’s administering the program for the DEP, with sponsorship from the U.S. Department of Energy and funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

To qualify for rebates, consumers must be West Virginia residents, purchase appliances from participating West Virginia retailers and certify on

“It’s good for the people of West Virginia and good for the planet.”

Greg Adolfson
DEP sustainability officer

the rebate application that the new appliance replaces an existing appliance. As part of the program, participating retailers have agreed to take old appliances out of service and recycle them.

To date, close to 19,000 rebate applications totaling roughly \$1.5 million have been submitted by West Virginia residents.

“Right now we have approximately 19,000 consumers in West Virginia who have benefited from this program,” Adolfson said. “That’s \$1.5 million in West Virginia consumers’ wallets.”

“Plus, we’ve been able to recycle 19,000 appliances that are no longer on the grid. And

See REBATE, Page 4

DEP submits Bay WIP

By Tom Aluise

West Virginia has taken a significant step in fulfilling its role in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s development of a Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment.

On Nov. 29, the state Department of Environmental Protection submitted to the EPA its Phase I Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) for the eight-county Eastern Panhandle section of West Virginia, which is part of the six-state Chesapeake Bay Watershed.



Hartman

The WIP allows West Virginia, with the help of federal and local governments, to craft its own water pollution control strategies into the EPA’s Bay TMDL, which will target load reductions of nitrogen and phosphorus from sources such as agriculture, wastewater treatment facilities, non-point storm water runoff and permitted storm water.

The Bay TMDL grew out of a May 2009 Executive Order from President Obama that declared the Chesapeake Bay a national treasure and called for the natural sustainability of the thousands of streams, creeks and rivers that make up its 64,000-square mile watershed. The Potomac River, which flows through West Virginia’s Eastern Panhandle, drains into the Bay.

Alana Hartman, Potomac Basin coordinator for the DEP’s Division of Water and Waste Management, said West Virginia’s Bay team is now waiting for EPA approval of its 116-page WIP. That should come in mid-December.

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DEP, DNR recycling Christmas trees

In an effort to keep discarded Christmas trees out of landfills and off the sides of roads, the Department of Environmental Protection and the Division of Natural Resources are sponsoring their sixth annual tree recycling event in 2011.

On Jan. 8, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., the DEP's Rehabilitation Environmental Action Plan (REAP) will accept used live Christmas trees at the Capitol Market in downtown Charleston.

The DNR will use the collected trees to create fish habitats at the bottom of lakes and streams throughout West Virginia.

Extra trees not needed for the state's waters are ground into mulch that's used throughout West Virginia.

REAP's Sandy Rogers said the recycling event gets bigger every year in terms of the number of trees collected after the holidays.

Last year, close to 450 trees were dropped off at the Capitol Market.

Those who donate trees will receive a free gift and can register for more prizes.

For more information contact REAP's Rogers at 926-0499, ext. 1004 or email Sandra.D.Rogers@wv.gov.

— Tom Aluise

REACHING

Continued from Page 2

"Our theory is 'people don't just need help during Christmas,'" said Janice Palmer, a secretary in Fairmont's Environmental Enforcement office.

The Marion County Humane Society is a no-kill animal shelter and needs help with sup-

plies such as dog and cat food, collars, leashes, garbage bags, bleach, paper towels and other cleaning materials.

The Marion County Soup Opera is a homeless shelter.

Fairmont staff will deliver its collected items to the two locations on Valentine's Day.

New Additions Recent DEP hires

- ▶ Helen Ann Ford, DWWM
- ▶ Mark Kesner, DMR
- ▶ Judith Thomas, OLS

REBATE

Continued from Page 3

we've replaced them with new energy-efficient appliances.

"It's good for the people of West Virginia and good for the planet."

The Rebate Program was slated to run until February 2012, but funds are expected to be

depleted before then. Close to 90 retailers across the state are participating, from the gigantic box stores to the mom-and-pop businesses.

Adolfson said many of the small retailers across the state have seen a boost in sales because of the rebate offerings.

The West Virginia Tax Department's Sales Tax Holiday, which ran from Sept. 1 through Nov. 30, also likely boosted rebate numbers by attracting consumers who wanted to take advantage of both the rebates and a break on the state's 6 percent sales and use tax.

"The best part of the

program for me is the people I've dealt with and being able to work out 100 percent of every issue that's arisen," Adolfson said.

"To me, this program is all about customer service.

"We've had very few complaints about the people involved in the process."

State hosting national conference

By Tom Aluise

Joe Hager has been busy in his first three months on the job as president of the National Association of State Land Reclamationists (NASLR).

Hager, an inspector supervisor out of the Division of Mining and Reclamation's Logan office, is



Hager

knee deep in planning for the annual NASLR conference, which is scheduled for a West Virginia stop in September 2011. The conference is tentatively set for Sept. 25-28 at Glade Springs Resort near Beckley.

"Essentially the (NASLR) president is responsible for setting the agenda for the coming year for the association, recruiting new membership and getting the word out about what NASLR does," said Hager, who'll serve a one-year term. "But the biggest thing is working on the annual conference."

NASLR was formed in 1972 and has roughly 1,000 members in 38 states. According to its Web site, NASLR "advocates the use of research, innovative technology and professional discourse to foster the restoration of lands and waters affected by mining-related activities."

"NASLR strives to promote and maintain a mutually beneficial



relationship between state and regulatory authorities and the mining community. ... and promotes the formulation of lasting partnerships between state land reclamationists, private mining groups and other interested parties to discuss, encourage, endorse and sponsor programs that will advance the art and science of land reclamation."

Hager said NASLR's annual conference allows for states to discuss pressing environmental issues, talk about new science and technology and engage in a productive exchange of reclamation ideas addressing all forms of mining, not just coal.

"The bottom line," Hager said, "is land has to be reclaimed, regardless of any type of mining."

Hager said typically 15 to 18 states will send representatives to the annual conference, which usually draws around 100 people.

The registration fee is \$150, although Hager said organizers are trying to land corporate sponsors to help states offset the cost of attending the conference.

All employees in the Department of Environmental Protection's DMR are NASLR members.

"Anyone who deals with reclamation can attend," Hager said. "And people who deal with water quality issues can attend. A lot of the practices are similar."

"This year, one of the big pushes is to incorporate more associate members (colleges and universities).

"I think we've got to find some newer ways and think outside the box to get some renewed interest."

The conference will include a field trip, classroom sessions and a wide range of speakers on topics such as natural stream restoration; the proliferation of wildlife on mine lands in West Virginia; riparian habitat; and legal issues facing regulators.

"You're there with people from many different states and the learning opportunities are outstanding," Hager said.

National awards for reclamation and community outreach, as well as a \$1,000 scholarship winner, will be announced during the conference.

Hager thanked his Logan boss, Benny Campbell, for allowing him the time to plan for the conference.

"I need to give Benny a big toot. He's been really gracious and supportive in giving us the latitude to work on this conference."

Oak Hill's Green Hats share friendship

By Colleen O'Neill

You've heard of the Red Hat Society. Well, the Department of Environmental Protection has the Green Hat Society.

What began as a way to build morale and friendship among the women working in the DEP's Oak Hill office has taken root as a monthly function.

It first started in January 2008, when two Oak Hill co-workers, Phyllis Farley and Patty Keys, were talking about the high number of new women working in the office. They decided it would be a good idea if everyone got together.



Green Hats (from left) Dolores Thompson, Sue Smith and Malinda Toney participate in an Easter Egg hunt.

"We counted up the women in the office and at the time, there were 28," said Keys, an environmental resource specialist in the Division of Mining and Reclamation.

"We thought it would be nice to have a monthly get-together to eat lunch and talk. We had our first meeting in February 2008. We invited all the women in

the office to bring their lunch."

Two years later, the Green Hat Society is still going strong.

But why green hats?

"The name 'Green Hats' started out as a joke," Keys said. "We were talking about the 'Red Hat Society' and I said it would be funny to call us the 'Green Hats' since we were environmental regulators. The name stuck. And no, we do not wear hats."

The Green Hat Society, of course, is not open to men. But Keys said her male co-workers often reap the benefits of leftover food.

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Watershed Celebration Day marks 12th year

By Colleen O'Neill

Everyone loves a party — especially when it's about them. Watershed Celebration Day was held on Nov. 5-6 at The Resort in Glade Springs, near Beckley.

Lasting more than a day, WCD featured tours on Friday and speakers, networking and educational activities on Saturday.

This year, participants visited the Piney Creek rain gardens, PAN's Wolf Creek acid mine drainage treatment systems and Dunloup Creek's new sewage infrastructure, a small-scale drinking water treatment plant, and learned about the flood buyout program.

"This was our 12th year," said Jennifer Pauer, the Division of Water and Waste Management's basin coordinator. "It seems like even after all this time, the volunteers continue to be excited about the event and participate. This year, we noticed a lot of new faces. We are seeing the second generation of wa-



Piney Creek Watershed Association members Phyllis Farley, Tara Shleser (chair) and Jeremiah Johnson (treasurer) proudly display their honor. Farley is a former DEP staffer.

Honoring watersheds

tershed volunteers. People volunteer because of their passion for something. The energy in the room is always pretty powerful."

The Piney Creek Watershed Association (PCWA) was honored as the 2010 Watershed Association of the Year by the West Virginia

Watershed Network. The award goes to the watershed association that has best exemplified outstanding efforts within its watershed.

The PCWA was formed in 2004 with the hopes of engaging citizens in the process of water quality improvements and storm-water management. In

six short years, the organization has been able to create partnerships which have helped promote its efforts.

These partnerships range from the Raleigh County Chamber of Commerce, Beckley Sanitary Board and the

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CHIEF

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When the position of Chief of Legal Services at the Department of Environmental Protection became available, Thomas saw it as an opportunity to not only further her legal career, but also rekindle her management and business skills.

"I no longer wanted to be confined to litigation practice and the DEP opportunity arose," said Thomas, who became the agency's chief of Legal Services on Nov. 1.

She is in charge of six attorneys and two paralegals.

"An in-house legal position allows me to work at preventing legal problems as well as dealing with them," Thomas said.

A 1983 West Virginia University law school graduate, Thomas grew up in the Edgewood section of Charleston. "I always knew I wanted

to be a lawyer," she said.

Thomas' first job out of law school was with a Charleston firm now called Allen Guthrie & Thomas, where much of her time was spent litigating in federal court.

Her position at the DEP is Thomas' first go-round in state government.

"I have been very pleasantly surprised at how friendly, efficient and responsible the DEP employees are," Thomas said. "It's been great.

"Something I constantly hear is that the DEP's cause is noble. It makes me feel good to be a part of that."

Thomas said the DEP's mission "is very much in alignment with my value system. I admire the goals of the DEP and the work we do."

Thomas has a son, Eran (22), who lives in Elkins while working and attending school, and a daughter, Kit (17), who's a senior at Charleston Catholic High School.

HONORING

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Girl Scouts of America, the Youth Museum of Southern West Virginia, and Independence Middle School.

In 2010, the PCWA focused its outreach and education efforts on implementing local water quality improvement projects.

It launched the “Somewhere Over the Rain Barrel” artistic rain barrel project with the goal of making rain barrels more appealing to the public and bringing local art to a wider audience.

The PCWA also has promoted reducing storm water pollution by creating a community wetland and a demonstration rain garden and is developing a State of the Watershed report in hopes of providing opportunities for economic development.

Social networking sites are used by the



John King, from the Office of Environmental Advocate, speaks during Watershed Celebration Day at Glade Springs.

PCWA to promote events and unique activities such as: participating in Chili Night to recruit volunteers; hosting an Annual Water Festival to spread the watershed word; partnering with the OMEGA Trade show targeted to convenience store owners and vendors to promote use of recycling bins and butt busters; and unveiling pet waste stations at a public ceremony.

In addition to the no-

tority, the PCWA received \$5,000 from the Dominion Foundation for being named Watershed Association of the Year.

“And the Department of Highways makes and post signs along the interstates of their watershed boundaries,” Pauer said.

“The volunteers of the Piney Creek Watershed Association have pooled their resources and made them count in

some really great ways,” Pauer said.

“They are not only getting the word out and implementing projects, but they have realized the importance of planning. They are on track to bring even more resources into their watershed.

“This is hard work and the West Virginia Watershed Network wants to make sure the volunteers know we recognize their efforts to go the extra mile.”

The West Virginia Watershed Network is comprised of state, federal, and non-profit organizations working to provide resources to watershed associations.

Current active members are the U.S. Office of Surface Mining, West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection, West Virginia Conservation Agency, Appalachian Coal County Watershed Team, and Canaan Valley Institute.



Triad and DEP officials meet with Prenter residents at Racine.

Boone residents learn details of planned Prenter water study

By Tom Aluise

Officials from Triad Engineering felt it was important for residents of the Prenter-Sand Lick area of Boone County to become familiar with their faces.

Contracted by the Department of Environmental Protection to conduct a comprehensive, one-year study on

water supplies in the Boone County community, Triad dispatched five of its employees to a Dec. 6 meeting in Racine with concerned citizens from the study area.

“We wanted you to see who will be out in the community,” Triad’s Trip Showen told the gathering.

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indepth

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DEP retirements

James Eskew

AML
Last day: Nov. 30, 2010
Years of service: 33

Sam Hampton

AML
Last day: Nov. 30, 2010
Years of service: 20

Randy Sovic

DWWM
Last day: Oct. 29, 2010
Years of service: 37

David Martin

DLR
Last day: Nov. 30, 2010
Years of service: 13



Richard Poling

DAQ
Last day: Nov. 30, 2010
Years of service: 28

Poling says: At the end of November I entered the next stage of my life. We work all of our

lives looking forward to retiring, but when the time arrives, there are many mixed emotions.

While retirement brings feelings of excitement and anticipation, feelings of regret also arise. I have spent over 28½ years working with great people in DEP and will sincerely miss the daily contact.

My DEP family has been a critical and caring part of my life, as exemplified by the outpouring of cards, calls, emails and support when I had my accident. I will never forget the people who touched my life during that difficult period.

I began working with the West Virginia Air Pollution Control Commission in 1969 immediately after my college graduation. I worked as a chemist until 1977. During my tenure as a chemist, my supervisor was the late Ronald Engle, who was one of the finest gentlemen I encountered during my career. I left the agency

to work at the Mount Storm Power Station, where I became chemistry supervisor, and later an engineer. I returned to the agency in 1990 as an engineer/inspector before it became the Division of Air Quality/DEP.

I was provided the opportunity to remain in the Eastern Panhandle and eventually became manager of the Fairmont and Romney regional offices. I will always be grateful to Dale Farley for providing me with those opportunities.

During my career, I saw the Division of Air Quality grow from a struggling agency with extreme turnover to a professional agency of knowledgeable and dedicated staff. While working in industry, I often felt I was being forced to produce, while at the DEP I felt like I wanted to produce as a member of a team. It is reassuring to know that the staff is always cooperative and available to provide assistance when concerns arise. I am very confident that the agency will continue to grow and protect the environment while understanding the needs of industry and the citizens of West Virginia.

On the future: Retirees have told me they don't know how they managed to get everything done around the house before they retired. My "honey do list" has grown so large that I think I already understand where they were coming from.

This summer my wife became reasonably upset when I often commented that I will do that "when I retire." Needless to say, I have ceased saying the three nasty words "when I retire" when a project or need arises.

I do hope to spend more time fishing, golfing, and enjoying the beautiful outdoors in the Eastern Panhandle. I look forward to the relaxing winter days when I can look out the window at the snow and return to the kitchen for another cup a coffee. My wife and I hope to travel some and enjoy more time with our grandchildren. One problem is that some degree of shopping is always associated with our travels. I will have to figure out how to spend my time without spending my money. In closing, I want to thank everyone at DEP for making my work experience an enjoyable and rewarding experience. Please keep in touch and good luck facing the environmental challenges of tomorrow.



November Employee of the Month

Benny Campbell, a DMR assistant director out of the Logan office, is pictured with Cabinet Secretary Randy Huffman. Campbell was honored for his great attitude, willingness to make tough management decisions and for being highly ethical in his daily duties.



Reward and Recognition winner

Carol Leffew, an administrative assistant out of DEP headquarters, was honored for constantly looking for ways to save the agency money and for recommending — and then helping work out the bugs — a new process that is saving the agency \$74,688 annually.

FRIENDSHIP

Continued from Page 5

“Any woman can be part of the group,” she said. “If you are a new female employee, you are automatically added to the group mailing list.

“As for the guys, well, they’re not included. Yes, we have been accused by some of being ‘sexist.’ However, that complaint seems to go away when we have a pot-luck and ALWAYS invite them to partake of the leftover food.

“This summer, the Green Hats had a cook-out for the entire office, so that smoothed everything over.”

The meetings are all about fun. Sometimes they have a theme, an activity, or a game. But the constant factor is food.

“We always eat,” Keys said. “That’s a given. We sometimes bring our lunches, but a lot of

times we have a themed lunch — that’s what the guys hope for; leftovers, you know. We have had a vegetarian lunch, Cinco de Mayo, a salad theme, and had a lesson on the origin of salads.

“We try to do a monthly theme, if possible. In March, we had a St. Patrick’s Day theme. Everyone had to bring in a legend or story and share. Penny Harris brought in an Irish drum and played it for us. We’ve had an Easter egg hunt and Valentine exchange. For Mother’s Day, we brought in pictures of our mothers and had to guess which picture belonged to the right daughter.”

Being a field office, there are a large number of inspectors who work out of Oak Hill. They, as well as office personnel, have schedules that fluctuate in busy times.

“We don’t require everyone to attend every

meeting,” Keys said. “We have field personnel who cannot always attend. We try to take everyone’s schedule into account. For example, in December we will not have a meeting due to the holidays and the office Christmas dinner.”

Unlike some other clubs, everyone in the Green Hat Society is equal with the same voting privileges. There are no club officers.

“We take suggestions from everyone and vote on it.” Keys said. “Sometimes if we haven’t had a meeting, I’ll take a topic and run it by people. We’re pretty relaxed about it.”

Keys thinks the club has improved relationships in the office, as well as working conditions.

“I’ve seen friendships grow between sections. You learn that you have things in common with

others in the office. Crafters meet outside the office and craft with each other, even those of us who are craft-challenged.

“We had a cookie exchange at Tina White’s house after hours for everyone. This year, we’re doing an ornament exchange and we opened it to the men folk. We have one man participating. It’s actually part of our culture in Oak Hill.”

But it’s about more than having fun and improving morale. Charity begins at home, or in this case, with the Green Hat Society.

“We decide what charity outreach project at Christmas that we want to do in our meetings,” Keys said. “Last year, we brought in dog and cat food items for the Fayette Humane Society. This year we are helping with the New Haven Christmas Project.”

QUESTION

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the environment.

On Nov. 16, the West Virginia University Extension Service hosted a forum — “Fundamentals of Natural Gas Exploration and Leasing” — at West Virginia Wesleyan College in an effort to answer some of those questions.

The Department of Environmental Protection’s Office of Oil and Gas (OOG) was represented on the panel by OOG Inspector Supervisor Dave Belcher.

Other participants included WVU geology professor Tim Carr, who presented an overview of the natural gas industry; the WVU Water Resource Institute’s Paul Ziemkiewicz, who spoke about natural gas exploration and water concerns associated with hydraulic fracturing; and Charleston attorney George Patterson, who discussed leasing issues.

A large part of the discussion focused on the Marcellus Shale and the controversial drilling methods used to extract gas from the rock formation. The Marcellus Shale is found beneath much of West Virginia and potentially has the largest natural gas reserves in the United States.

“We know it’s an extremely hot topic right now,” said Brian Wickline, of the WVU Extension Service, and the meeting’s modera-

“I’m just going to stick with the facts and talk about our rules and codes.”

Dave Belcher
OOG Inspector
Supervisor

tor. “And there’s a lot of information out there about this topic.”

Before a packed room, the OOG’s Belcher broke down his office’s role in regulating the natural gas industry in West Virginia. Using a 44-slide presentation, Belcher covered topics such as common areas regulated; the number of wells in the state; staff responsibilities; general site construction; site inspection procedures; plugging activities; and accidents and investigations.

Belcher also touched on the ongoing, internal review of the OOG that could produce new legislation.

“They were looking for educational information and a general overview of what we do,” Belcher said. “It was strictly educational. I thought what we presented represented us objectively.”

The forum, in fact, was the

perfect setting for a regulatory state agency to educate the public, Belcher said. None of the speakers took sides on particular issues.

“I’m just going to stick with the facts and talk about our rules and codes,” Belcher said.

OOG Chief James Martin said, “I think it’s important that everyone tries to deal with the facts and that they have an understanding of what those are. There are a lot of questions, a lot of concerns and a lot of inaccurate information out there. We provide what we know, and it helps everybody.”

WVU’s Wickline said the Extension Service plans to conduct more informational meetings on gas drilling around the state.

“I anticipate us participating in the future,” Belcher said. “We’ve done it in the past and we’ll continue to do it.”

Belcher said his office benefits from meetings with the public. They can put a face on the OOG.

“We have to work with the public, as well as industry. So, these meetings give us a chance to receive some feedback.

“I think seeing people face-to-face is more helpful as far as communicating,” Belcher said. “There have been folks in the past who didn’t even realize there was an Office of Oil and Gas. It’s good exposure for us in that sense.”

BAY

Continued from Page 3

“Now the ball is in their (EPA) court,” Hartman said.

The EPA hopes to have its Bay TMDL completed by the end of 2010. States have committed to having all pollution-control measures in place by 2025 and 60 percent in place by 2017.

West Virginia’s Phase I WIP is actually a second draft. The original document was submitted to the EPA in September but didn’t, among other things, demonstrate reasonable assurance that proposed pollutant reductions would be achieved.

“I think that really galvanized us to write a better WIP,” said Hartman.

In addition to DEP staffers, West Virginia’s WIP was developed by the West Virginia Conservation Agency, West Virginia Department of Agriculture, Cacapon Institute, and The Conservation Fund-Freshwater Institute.

“We’re nervous now to learn whether the EPA thinks our new WIP meets expectations,” Hartman said. “The EPA did work very closely



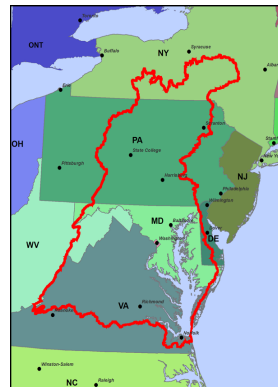
The town of Harpers Ferry sits on the banks of the Poto-mac River in West Virginia’s Eastern Panhandle. The Poto-mac is part of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, which is highlighted in red in the graphic below.

with us and all the states to make sure it did.

“They made themselves available to us. They would rather the states handle this, and we would, too.”

Hartman said the EPA could impose its own backstops, such as tightening permits for wastewater or designating more areas to be regulated for storm water if a state’s WIP doesn’t meet standards.

West Virginia’s working target cap loads are approximately 4.7 million pounds per year for nitrogen and 750,000 pounds per year for phosphorus. The sedi-



ment goal is 226-248 pounds of total suspended solids per year.

West Virginia’s Phase II WIP is due by the end of 2011 and Phase III will be completed in 2017. Next year’s WIP will be in even greater detail than the Phase I

document.

“What the EPA is envisioning is county targets,” Hartman said. “I think we’re shooting for that, but I’m not sure it will work out. The difficulty is we don’t have flow gauges everywhere we need them.”

In developing the Phase II WIP, Hartman said a significant amount of time will be spent with stakeholders, including county and municipal governments, parks and recreation officials, farmers and home builders.

“Home builders are a big one,” she said. “We really want to work on storm water issues with them. There are a lot of proposed changes to the way we regulate storm water in the WIP and a lot of suggestions of things they can do voluntarily.”

“We want to find out what barriers they face and help them overcome those barriers through grants or other resources.”

Close to 17 million people live in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. There are about 88,000 farms, close to 500 significant treatment plants and thousands of smaller facilities in the watershed.

STUDY

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Showen, along with Triad’s John Meeks, is heading up the \$130,000 study, which will analyze whether human activity, including coal mining and activities associated with mining, may have negatively affected the quality of groundwater being used as drinking water by residents of the study area.

The study area includes all residences along Hopkins Fork of the Big Coal River and tributaries of Hopkins Fork from Seth to Printer.

DEP Environmental Advocate Pam Nixon organized the meeting

with the help of area resident Maria Lambert.

In addition to Nixon, Dennis Stottlemyer, from the Office of Environmental Advocate, and Nick Schaer, from the Division of Mining and Reclamation, participated in the meeting.

“We’re just getting started on this,” Showen said.

“We’re inventorying wells in the area. We want to hear your stories.

“We want to get you the right answers. This is being done for the community.

“Let’s make sure we get it right.”

Triad employees will sample residential water supplies for the presence of contami-

nants which might affect human health.

“It’s critical that we get access to your drinking water wells,” Showen said.

“The more data points we have, the better the study is going to be. We can only be as thorough as we’re allowed.”

Triad also will sample area surface and groundwater locations that include any possible mining and industrial contamination sources.

“We’re going to be totally objective,” Showen said.

“We want this to be a scientific study.”

DEP Cabinet Secretary Randy Huffman said Triad’s study will

be far more comprehensive than previous studies done in the area and was needed because of the continuing concern of people in the community about the quality of their water.

Municipal water lines were recently extended to many homes in the area but a number of residents still rely on wells for their water supply.

“We definitely welcome the study,” area resident Jennifer Massey told Showen. “And we’ll do anything we can to assist you.”

Stottlemyer said the DEP will likely arrange another meeting in the spring between local community members and Triad.