

VOTER

League of Women Voters of
Indiana County, Pennsylvania
www.palwv.org/indiana



Volume XXVIII, Issue 2 February, 2009

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Legislative Interviews

It's time again for our annual legislative interviews with our state representatives and state senator. It's a good time to see the League at work, meet our new members and renew our interests with our regular members. The meetings are held at the Eat 'n Park Restaurant in Indiana, PA, and each member orders individually off the menu.

Scheduled Interviews

at Eat 'n Park

Representative David Reed:

Thursday, February 5, 2009 at 8:30 am

Representative Jeff Pyle:

Wednesday, February 18, 2009 at 12 noon

Purpose of Legislative Interviews:

- ◆ To learn where legislators stand on specific issues.
- ◆ To get a reading on what legislation might be introduced or re-introduced in the new session.
- ◆ To plant a seed of interest on any issue they may not have considered, or be familiar with.
- ◆ To help Leagues build a relationship with their legislators.

This is where we get to hear what the legislator thinks about the issues; not a time for lobbying for our position. The questions that all chapters use come from the state board and will be forwarded to the members.

Please let Aida Shotts know if you plan to attend. Her email is ashotts@alltel.net. Phone: 724-354-3482. The Eat 'n Park allows us to use the back room as long as we have enough people to make it worth their while. We are working on a meeting with Senator White; the time and location will be announced.

Legislative Interview Questions:

Would you support legislation to reform our system of redistricting to take effect in 2011?

Which of the following, if any, would you support to remove unnecessary barriers to voting:

- ⇒ Provide that any eligible citizen can register and vote on Election Day.
- ⇒ Establish a system for early voting to alleviate problems such as long lines and excessive waiting times associated with high voter turnout.
- ⇒ Remove the requirement that registered voters have an excuse in order to cast an absentee ballot. (No excuse necessary for absentee voting).

Do you think the time is right for Pennsylvania to hold another Constitutional Convention? What form should it take?

Do you have any legislative priorities related to the current economic crisis?

Current Drilling Practices for Marcellus Shale Wells

Marcellus Shale wells are much deeper, more costly, require more water, and produce more gas than traditional shallow wells.

Indiana County has about 17,000 shallow gas wells. The County Commissioners announced on November 28, 2008 that they have negotiated with XTO Energy of Fort Worth, TX, to explore and possibly drill three Marcellus wells on Indiana County airport property.

A Marcellus well is drilled vertically for about a mile (6,000 feet), going through multiple layers of rock, and is deeper than potable water supplies. At roughly a mile, special points are used to turn the shaft 90 degrees over the course or several hundred feet. The drilling then continues horizontally for up to 5000 feet.

A steel casing is cemented into place to stabilize the well bore and protect the ground water sources from fracking fluids. Three to five acres are cleared for the drilling pad as compared to a half acre for a shallow well.

Fracking fluid is hydraulically blasted into the shale, opening cracks that let the gas escape. The fractures are held open with sand mixed with the fluid. Flow-back pipes collect the gas and fracking fluid which now has a high concentration of chemicals from the drilling process and of salt from the ancient sea where the sedimentary shale formed.

According to Brian Swistock, a Penn State water resources expert, the well casings have been known to fail but failure is not commonplace. He believes the laws are adequate but that the biggest problem is too few inspectors.

Marcellus drillers use historic data, test wells, and often seismic 3D or 2D testing to help geologists select drilling sites. Shallow well drillers use maps, geologists, and their practical experience with the area to determine drilling locations. All drillers are required to notify property owners within 1000 feet of the drill site of their intent to drill. While not required, most drillers perform pre-drilling water quality tests.

The fracking operation with a Marcellus

well can use between one and seven million gallons of water, while fracking a shallow well uses between 60,000 to 80,000 gallons of water from a local creek. The used waste water is collected in lined pits. Some of the groups advocate for the use of steel tanks.

Drillers hire water haulers with 4,200 gallon trucks at about \$80 per hour to transport the waste water for treatment. For shallow wells the water handling can be \$5000 for water disposal and \$5000 for trucking. For a Marcellus well, the water volume and costs are considerably higher. For this area, treatment plants are located in Creekside, Josephine, Tunnelton, and Franklin. An on-site cleaning plant service may soon be available locally.

Overall costs of a Marcellus Shale well can be \$3-5 million. A shallow well costs in the range of \$200,000 to \$250,000. The time to complete the permit process through the Department of Environmental Protection is now at about 45 days for a four page application that is quite thorough about siting and water use. The DEP is on pace to issue 8,000 permits in 2008 compared to 2,358 in 2003. A fraction are Marcellus permits.

For shallow well drilling, equipment is loaded onto six to ten trucks, while for a Marcellus well about 70 trucks are needed to bring in the drilling equipment. Drillers also need to pipe the recovered gas out to a main pipeline. These large transmission lines are becoming full due to increased volumes.

Submitted by Mary Beth Sweeney

The League of Women Voters of Indiana County will have a dinner meeting for members and guests on February 17 at 6:00 pm at the Eat 'n Park Restaurant.

Betsy Mallison, formerly with the DEP office in Pittsburgh, now with Bill Green Associates, a PR firm representing several drillers, and Paul Hart of Hart Resource Technologies will be the featured speakers for the evening and will discuss issues related to natural gas extraction from Marcellus Shale.

THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS!

The League of Women Voters of Indiana County would like to thank the sponsors of our January 31 candidate workshop. Your help made this project a great success.

- American Association of University Women
- Diamond Drugs, Inc.
- Federation of Democratic Women
- First Commonwealth Bank
- Indiana Council of Republican Women
- Indiana County Commission for Women
- Indiana County Commissioners
- Indiana First Bank
- NAACP of Indiana County
- Savings and Trust Bank

FAMILY FUN FEST

*The Early Care and Education Committee (ECEC) of the Children's Advisory Commission of Indiana County is busy planning for the **6th Annual Family Fun Fest**. This will be a day of fun and education for children and their parents.*

March 14, 2009

10:00 am to 3:00 pm

The Indiana County League of Women Voters will have a table at these festivities. The focus this year is on children's books and the League will be featuring the book, "Duck for President" by Doreen Cronin.

If you have some time to volunteer at the League table, contact Pepita Jimenez-Jacobs at drjacobs@yourinter.net or phone (724) 463-3683



NEW MEMBERS

We want to welcome our newest members. If you see them, say "HI".

Elizabeth Antolik
42 Townview Drive
Indiana, PA 15701

Carol Maderer
556 Elm Street
Indiana, PA 15701

Cindy Rogers
944 East Pike Road
Indiana, PA 15701

A newsletter of the
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We're on the
Web!

www.palwv.org/indiana



CALENDAR of UPCOMING EVENTS

February 5, 2009—Legislative Interview with Rep. David Reed, 8:30 am at Eat n' Park Restaurant

February 16, 2009—Board Meeting, Diane Duntley's home—**NOON**

February 17, 2009—Marcellus Shale Dinner member meeting. 6:00 pm. Eat n' Park Restaurant. *(We will order from the menu and pay for our own dinners)*

February 18, 2009—Legislative interview with Rep. Jeff Pyle, NOON. Eat n' Park Restaurant.

Legislative interview with Don White—location and time to be announced.

March 14, 2009— Family Fun Fest. 10:00 am – 3 pm. Indiana Mall. Theme: 110 Best Books for Children (Duck for President).

March 20, 2009—Marcellus Shale meeting at Mary Beth Sweeney's home—**10:00 am**

April—Marcellus Shale Study Consensus.

May 2, 2009—Annual Garage Sale—Susan McClure's garage.



Know someone who may be interested in membership? Let Olga Platt know at 724-465-2073 and she will send a brochure & short letter describing LWVIC's activities.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Membership is open to men and women of voting age.