

Settlement may be possible now in gas royalty dispute

by Dennis Dobson

Recent articles in area newspapers have detailed the fight of Mist-Birkenfeld area residents to obtain what they consider to be an equitable redistribution of the royalties produced by the Mist gas fields, through the introduction of Senate Bill 2620. Plans to use the gas wells as a vast natural underground reservoir for the storage of natural gas imported from Canada have also been announced by Northwest Natural Gas Co. and approved by the county Planning Commission.

The Vernonia Freedom has learned that a compromise agreement between the affected areas and the taxing districts that receive these royalties may be imminent. Although declining to be identified and hesitant to commit himself one source close to the negotiations said, "The impacted

areas have decided upon a compromise figure that we feel the various taxing districts will agree is fair." Informed sources also said that a meeting designed to hammer out an agreement between area

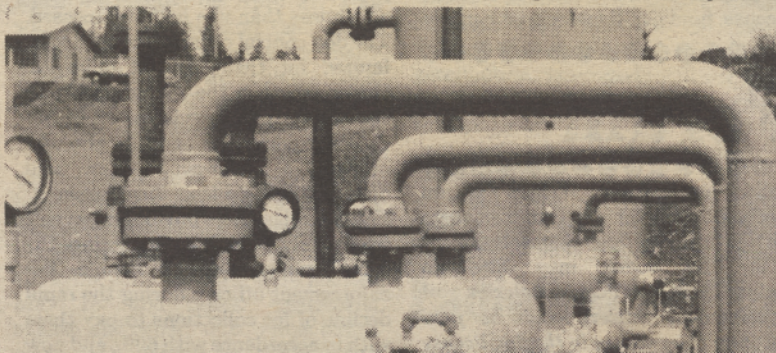
representatives, officials from each of the 47 tax districts in the county and local political figures, should be possible.

SB 2620, still in committee, would set aside 50 percent of the royalties

received by the county with one half of that figure earmarked for school districts and the other half to be split up among the various emergency service units in the impacted area. An additional \$50,000 to increase law enforcement capabilities in the area was also asked for. The proposed compromise, as currently explained, would instead collect a smaller portion of each tax district's revenue than currently proposed in SB 2620 and would create a citizen's board similar to the county commission to regulate dispersal of the funds.

The potential compromise suggested as a 'rider' on SB 2620 and intended to replace the existing law, appears to be the effort of an ad hoc group that appeared before the Interim Budget Committee at the state capitol Monday, May 4. The

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ALL'S WELLS THAT ENDS WELLS—Terminals at Northwest Natural Gas Co. gas wells in Mist. Before long sights like this one will be common throughout many Oregon counties.

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Serving the Nehalem Valley

FREEDOM

New dog control law enacted—new laws have more bite

Stiff fines and the possible confiscation of offending animals face dog owners cited under provisions of a new Dog Control Ordinance passed under emergency provisions by the city council last Monday. Mayor Henry Andereg was quick to point out that the new ordinance is designed to plug a number of loop holes and oversights in the existing regulations.

The thirteen sections of the ordinance deal with situations ranging from dog bite complaints to declaring local police prerogatives in dealing with complaints against dog owners or their animals. Passed by unanimous vote the new ordinance declares an emergency to exist in Vernonia and declares the new ordinance to be effective immediately. Under the new provisions four or more dogs under an individuals' control constitutes a kennel and requires the purchase of a \$50 dog license fee and full compliance with city planning and zoning ordinances. Currently no allowances for kennel operation exist within these guidelines and any future kennel or pet shop would require a zoning variance.

Although the new ordinance does empower local police officials to impound dogs under certain circumstances it does not allow them to enter a private residence for that purpose without a search warrant. Conviction under any provision of the new regulations can mean a maximum fine of \$500. Each day that an individual remains in non-compliance is also counted as a separate offense, meaning that a particularly obstinate offender might accrue fines up to a maximum of \$500 each day. Repeat offenses within a two year period can mean a fine of up to \$1000 for each day of non-

compliance, as well.

The new control act, while enlarging local options, does not establish Vernonia as a separate dog control district and does not mean a holding facility need be provided locally. Although dogs can be impounded by local officers all control of the animal is transferred to Columbia County and their regulations governing disposition of impounded animals will be enforced. Interested parties may obtain a copy of the six page Dog Control Ordinance during regular business hours at City Hall for a nominal re-copying fee.

In response to a current effort at re-apportioning local political districts based on the results of the latest census the city has informed Representative Magruder of its wish to be a part of District One, rather than be included in District Two. The city wrote Magruder saying they felt that Vernonia has more in common with St. Helens, Scappoose, Rainier and Clatskanie (All in District One) than with Jewell, Seaside and Astoria (included in District Two). Representative Magruder replied to the city that she agrees with this position and will certainly push for it but that in the event it is denied, she feels that District Two Representative Ted Bugas will do a good job of representing our interests in the state Capitol.

The city recorder, Don Dunaway, reported that he has recently written to International Paper (IP) regarding the acquisition of approximately ten acres next to the existing sewer lagoon for the construction of a new sewage treatment facility. Explaining that the city needs a response soon as the weather will soon permit work to begin and a variety of tests still remain to be performed and that the

contractors, already hired, need warning time before beginning operations Dunaway also wrote that the city feels it should not tie the sewer system to a development that will take years to reach full completion. When the initial proposal for the development was made by Butler and Randall last month it was suggested, since IP desired to sell the entire 220 acres sight as a package rather than piecemeal, that the developers construct the new lagoon

and then deed it over to the city. Unfortunately, the developers feel they can't begin construction on the sight until next spring while the city is feeling the squeeze the Department of Environmental Quality is applying. DEQ will not allow any further hook-ups to the existing system until the capacity is increased and the uncontrolled flow of essentially untreated effluent from

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Briefly

MEALS ON WHEELS NEEDS HELP

The Meal On Wheels program needs volunteer drivers to help deliver a hot, nutritious noon time meal to the home-bound elderly people in your area.

The Meals On Wheels program delivers meals five days a week to people 60 years old or older who, for one reason or another, are unable to enjoy the companionship meals at their local senior center, are unable to shop for food, or prepare well balanced meals.

For further information please call your local senior center and ask about the Meals On Wheels program.

SOFTBALL TEAMS ORGANIZED

On Monday, May 11, 1981 at 7 pm there will be an organizational meeting of the Vernonia Softball Association at the West Oregon Electric Co-op meeting room. Each team planning to participate in the 1981 season should have one representative in attendance.

LOGGING ACCIDENT

A freak accident left Doug Dethlefs severely injured and hospitalized Tuesday morning when a tree being cut by another member of his logging crew broke loose and fell, hitting another tree and falling to the ground, pinning Dethlefs to the tree he was falling.

"It's the call we dread the most: 'We have a man down'," says Jerry Sanders of Vernonia Control. The accident, called in by Harry Farr at 10:55 am, May 5, left Dethlefs with his left hip fractured, multiple facial lacerations and possible skull fracture sources say. According to personnel on the scene it is believed Dethlefs also suffered multiple fractures of his left arm and shoulder, splintered ribs and possible internal injuries. At press time Emanuel Hospital in Portland would only say they were unwilling to comment on Dethlefs condition at that time, the charge nurse said.

"Something like this is a one in a million event," said one logger. "Unfortunately, once a tree goes out of control there's really nothing

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