

Need for Mist money explained

To the Editor:

I am writing to let the people of Columbia County know just what is going on in this gas well royalties fight, and why we're fighting so hard to receive a fair share of the monies being generated here in the Mist gas

and private donations:

On August 1, 1979 Robert Townsend, of Billings, Montana, a gas drilling company executive, was transported. In this same accident Don Soderback was transported via Life Flight to Emanuel Hospital.

Public Forum

fields.

The very real threat posed by these wells far outweighs our local capability to provide adequate emergency services at this time. Not only is our need readily apparent but, we feel, there are strong moral compulsions as well. It is patently unfair for the vast bulk of the county revenue produced in the Mist-Birkenfeld area to remain outside the area that not only produces it but needs, in very real terms, to upgrade its protection facilities in specific response to a threat that simply didn't exist before the gas wells went in.

The dilemma posed by these wells, by projected new wells in the Nehalem Valley, and the use of emptied wells as reservoirs for Canadian gas represent a broad spectrum of challenges faced by communities everywhere. I have been informed of plans to drill new well sites in the Vernonia and Chapman areas this summer. If so, the problem is more likely to grow larger rather than smaller and will affect an ever growing number of people.

One of the largest challenges we face concerns providing adequate emergency medical care not only for our own residents but for logging crews working locally and for gas well personnel and testing employees as well. The examples listed below amply demonstrate the regularity of that need arising and the severity of the medical need itself. Please keep in mind that ours is a purely volunteer ambulance association funded entirely by the volunteers themselves

Injuries included; dislocated hip, avulsion on lower hip and a cut on right knee.

On July 13, 1980 we transported Mountain Geographical employee Sharon Wells. Wells tripped and hit her head on a tree, knocking herself unconscious for twenty minutes.

In November 1980 we aided Life Flight in evacuating Rick Trice, an employee of Taylor Drilling, while he was only semi-conscious. Mist-Birkenfeld Quick Response aided in radio communications, lights and personnel during a night rescue.

As well as obvious problems we've encountered, such as maintaining adequate emergency response and police protection, we also face a number of far less obvious dilemmas. Foremost among them is the proliferation of litter increased traffic along our small rural roads has meant. Were also suffering through a noticeable increase in strangers climbing our fences, unexplained explosions along the highway, mysterious oil spills, suspiciously unmarked oil trucks leaving an oily trail along the highway behind them, the loss of eight windows in the Natal Grange Hall from seismic blasting, and at least a doubling of traffic during the last two years.

Although the sheriff's office does its best to offer us adequate protection it remains, nonetheless, far from complete. Some of the money we would accrue through our last proposal is specifically earmarked for the sheriff's office to aid in increasing

continued on page 3

M-B CHIEF SAYS

Mist fire protection inadequate

To the Editor:

During the past few years it has become increasingly apparent that fire protection in our area is inadequate. This is due, in part, to an influx of gas drilling equipment and crews. In order to provide the kind of protection our community deserves it will be necessary to improve our equipment, fire and ambulance, in the very near future.

The possibility of natural gas fire

Air packs too old

To the Editor:

I would like to bring to your attention our present situation with our self-contained breathing apparatus. We have six breathing apparatuses, some are Scott Pac's and some are M.S.A.'s, all of which are in operation. However, due to the OSHA regulations we are operating with sub-standard breathing apparatus.

The units we now have, were given to us by other departments who didn't want them anymore, as they were old and worn out. But they still operate. These units are all of the demand breathing type, which means you have to inhale in order to get air. This type of mask is no longer legal to use under OSHA regulations, because when you inhale it creates a negative pressure. Anyone with a beard or ear trouble could get contamination of air into the mask.

The manufacturers of these units and ones like them came out with a pressure demand mask. This mask provides a protection factor of 10,000 to 1, while demand equipment provides a factor of less than 100 to 1. These units protect by applying a slight, positive pressure to the breathing circuit at all times. Thus, preventing contaminants from entering the mask. This is not just a new piece of equipment or a luxury. This would mean the possible safety of our volunteers. I would like you and the board to take this into consideration.

Terry K. Bair
Assistant Fire Chief
Mist-Birkenfeld Fire Dept.

increases with every well that is drilled. Communication received from Fire Chief Miles Felmy of Deerfield, Ohio proves these fires can and do occur more frequently than we have been led to believe.

In addition to the possibility of well fire, other problems have already occurred. One instance involved an illegal fire, whereupon fire investigation led to the recovery of several thousand dollars of stolen tools and equipment from local logging firms. Also, hides and carcasses of deer and elk were found. As a direct result of fire investigation these men were found guilty of theft and poaching.

There have been numerous acts of negligence on the part of the drilling crews that could have had very serious consequences. These include telephone service being interrupted for the entire area, and accidents in remote places involving both life and property.

I would like the Board of Directors to take the following steps to protect our community:

1. Notification of well sites and seismic crews.
2. On site inspection and regulations.
3. Application and fees for both drilling and explosives being used to locate gas fields.

Additional funds will need to be allocated to implement these policies, but I feel your prompt action will lead to a more successful fire department.

Norman V. Mueller
Chief

Mist-Birkenfeld Fire Dept.

MEETING NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the Upper Nehalem Valley Citizen Planning Advisory Committee (CPAC) will hold its regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, May 27, 1981 at 7:30 pm at the West Oregon Electric Building. Agenda items include the review of the new proposed Zoning Ordinance draft; goal 5 policies and what affect it will have on the area and review lands for an exception to Goals 3 and 4.

All local residents are invited to attend.

For further information contact the Planning and Building Department, First Floor, Courthouse, St. Helens, Oregon or call 397-1501.

Coramae Freeman
CPAC Coordinator

5-21

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

The Columbia County Juvenile Services Commission will be presenting their 1981-1982 Comprehensive Plan to the State Juvenile Services Commission on May 22, 1981, in Portland. The presentation will include an explanation of the programs funded for the 1981-1982 year by JSC funds. Those programs are:

- Boys and Girls Aid Society
- Expanded Family Counseling
- Scapoose Alternative School
- Alcohol and Drug Education in Schools and Youth Alcohol Information School
- Parent Training Network

The next meeting of the local Juvenile Services Commission will be June 8, at 7 pm in the Extension Conference Room of the Courthouse. The public is invited.

Ms. Kathy Patton
Portland, Ore.

Development seen as harbinger of progress

To the Editor:

I've heard a lot of talk about the Old Mill site, and only a few against the development plans for it. Whether the merchants on Bridge Street know it or not, they will have to conform with progress and competition. New merchants bring in new ideas. Light industrial will mean getting our people off welfare or getting those

who have been laid off back on the job market again.

For instance, I've come up against too many times a product being sold out of stock, we'll have to order, which will take a week, or we don't sell that. I get hot under the collar from the same excuse, enough to get into the car and travel to Hillsboro, Forest Grove or St. Helens, just to shop. Even though it takes more time

and gas, the price of gas is cheaper to purchase when you get there than in Vernonia.

Have you ever looked at your water after it has sat in a glass for a week? Ever thought about how many times a day you go to the bathroom? Have you caught the aroma at the schools? The city will have help cleaning that up. Otherwise it would sadden me to think of Vernonia dying off like a ghost town.

I've seen people come I've seen the last straw that broke many a man's back, leave Vernonia. You can't stay the same way you've been the last 30 years for the next 30 years.

Maybe the City Council could see fit to work with these developers instead of against them, by the sounds of the Columbia County Planning meeting there will be enough hurdles for the developers to overcome.

Best of luck and a speedy bureaucratic process for the developers—they need you in Vernonia.

Vernonia Freedom

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