

VOTER

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



Volume XXVIII, Issue 7 October, 2009

LWVIC Board of Directors, 2009-2010

Sherene Hess, President,
724 465-5056

Beth Marshall, V. President,
724-465-8974

Sandy Whitson, Treasurer,
724 463-7205

Ann Rea, Secretary,
724-465-5796

Stephanie Chandler

Diane Duntley

JoAnne Ferraro

Nancy Fricke

Pepita Jimenez-Jacobs

Jane Lord

Carol Maderer

Clarice Reber

Cindy Rogers

Karen Ross

Aida Shotts

Mary Beth Sweeney

A TOUR OF A MARCELLUS SHALE WELL SITE

Last July the Environmental Issues Committee took a “go-see tour” of a Range Resources LLP Marcellus Shale natural gas well site in Washington County.

On a sunny July day, we put on hard hats and covered our toes with steel toe covers and visited a well site. The drillers were putting in the last of six horizontal wells. Standing on a platform about eight feet about the ground, the men maneuvered 90 foot strings of pipe into place. Generators roared and slowly the pipe went down. Then a crane would swing another string up about the platform and the roustabouts would secure it in place.

A tank recently emptied sat near the platform. We could see the sludge of gray-black rock cuttings and clay slurry that was coming into the tank, waste from the drilling. The sludge would be trucked to a wastewater treatment plant. Nearby was a rack of 30 foot carbon steel pipes that had been trucked in. Down from the well site was a plastic lined pit filled with the fresh water. The hydraulic fracturing company would use it to “frac the well,” the next stage in the process.

The site looked like a medieval village—trailers circling the perimeter, men in their hard hats and steel tipped boots, striding with purpose. The access road up the hill was the only way in.

Earlier, we had met with our three hosts in a brand new conference room in a brand new building in a well-landscaped corporate park and had been shown a power point presentation of the advantages of natural gas as a source of energy, the benefits to the economy, and the positive impact Range is having on southwestern Pennsylvania. We were able to ask hard questions about frac water. Jim Cannon, one of the hosts, said he would drink the chemicals in a glass of water if they were in the same proportion

of chemicals to water. We did not, however, ask him if he would drink the briny water that comes out of the well.

We toured the site of the cryogenic plant Range is building with MarkWest. There the methane we buy for residential use will be separated from the other gases and water that come out of the well. The gases can be separated because they turn to liquid at different temperatures.

We ended the tour with visiting a producing well where the site had been reclaimed. The gas field “Christmas tree” sat in a field of alfalfa lined by a strip of squash at the end of an access road. There was a solar powered monitor to send data off to a computer and a condensate tank. The six-acre well site now had the footprint of a two-car garage.

The experience was invaluable. We were able to see what we had been reading about. We were able to talk directly to knowledgeable people in the industry who answered our questions with patience.

(Susan McClure)

MARCELLUS SHALE STUDY MEMBER MEETINGS

The Environmental Issues Committee has scheduled a series of Saturday breakfast meetings for LWVIC members to discuss the issues involved with the extraction of natural gas from the Marcellus Shale strata.

The committee has been working very hard since the State convention in May. When the LWVPA adopted the Marcellus shale gas extraction for a state-level study and consensus process, our committee was mandated to organize the study and draw up consensus questions. It is a tremendous responsibility and the committee has been meeting several times a month since then to complete the study guide and the questions.

We are fortunate to be able to take part in the consensus process guided by some of the most knowledgeable people in the country, our own committee, on this issue. We will be having a series of meetings to discuss the study guide and to reach consensus. Each meeting will center around a different topic.

- ◆ October 24—At a breakfast meeting at Fire Mountain we will discuss extraction and environmental issues.
- ◆ November—Time and date to be announced. We will discuss the economic issues relating to the process.
- ◆ January 16, 2010—8:00 am at Fire Mountain. We will discuss tax and regulation proposals.
- ◆ February 13, 2010—8:00 am at Fire Mountain. We will take consensus and send our decisions to the LWVPA to help form the state position for future action.

For further information, you can look up the study guide on the LWVPA website at www.palwv.org. We urge all of our members to take part in this very important process. We need everyone's input.

This picture is of a Marcellus well in the process of being drilled near the Jimmy Stewart Airport.

The photo was taken by Jim Reber, and we thank him for taking it.

The drilling is now completed on this well.



A newsletter of the
League of Women Voters
of Indiana County,
Pennsylvania
PO Box 672
Indiana, PA 15701

Phone: 724 465-5056
Email: lwvic@yourinter.net



We're on the
Web!

www.palwv.org/indiana



CALENDAR of UPCOMING EVENTS

October 12—Board Meeting, 7:00 pm, Diane Duntley's home. All Welcome

October 24—Member meeting on Marcellus Shale Study. Fire Mountain Breakfast—8:00 am

October 27—Candidates Night, S & T Arena—7:00 pm

November—Member meeting on Marcellus Shale Study—Date and Time TBA

November 3—Election Day

November 9—Board Meeting, 7:00 pm, Diane Duntley's home. All welcome

January 16, 2010—Member meeting on Marcellus Shale Study. Fire Mountain Breakfast—8:00 am

February 13—Consensus meeting—Marcellus Shale Study. Fire Mountain Breakfast—8:00 am

Know someone who may be interested in membership? Let President Sherene Hess know at 724-465-5056 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.