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Officials tout planned pipeline project

Posted on 16 December 2009

By Lewis Delavan
Arkansas News Bureau

CENTER RIDGE — Officials from across north-central Arkansas today threw their support behind a proposed \$1.3 billion pipeline project to pump natural gas from the Fayetteville Shale play.

The Fayetteville Express Pipeline, a joint venture between Kinder Morgan Energy Partners LP and Energy Transfer Partners LP, is expected to produce more than 2,000 jobs in Arkansas and Mississippi building the pipeline that will connect to lines serving the Midwest and Northeast.

“We are pleased to announce our support for the Fayetteville Express Pipeline. This is an important project for the state and many communities along its path,” state Senate President Pro Tem Bob Johnson, D-Bigelow, said in issuing a legislative proclamation of support for the project during a luncheon meeting of area leaders in this Conway County community.

Construction on 185-mile natural gas pipeline system is expected to begin early next year, pending final regulatory approval was expected to come Thursday.

Building the pipeline is an act of faith by the joint partners, said state Rep. Eddie Hawkins, D-Vilonia.

“These folks have really stuck their necks out,” Hawkins said. “They have made an investment that you and I can’t comprehend. The fact they have the courage to do this is to be commended.”

Hawkins said he paid his way through college by working on a pipeline crew. He said his father spent 42 years building pipelines.

Recovering the investment will take years, said Allen Fore, director of community relations for Fayetteville Express Pipeline LLC.

“We appreciate the support we have received from the state of Arkansas as we move closer to construction on this important project,” Fore said.

Conway County Judge Jimmy Hart, who co-hosted the event with FEP, said the project would generate jobs and revenue for his and many other communities in the state.

“It’s going to be a big, big impact on us,” Hart said.

“This is also a great economic opportunity for other parts of the state,” said state Rep. Jane English, D-North Little Rock. Her district covers part of the Fayetteville Shale area.

The proposed pipeline is to originate in Conway County and continue eastward through White County, terminating at an interconnect with Trunkline Gas Co. in Panola County, Miss.

It will cross beneath the Mississippi River.

In October 2008, Chesapeake Entergy Corp. announced a 10-year agreement with the joint venture to transport gas through the Fayetteville Express line, which is projected to transport 375 million cubic feet of natural gas per day.

At the time, Chesapeake CEO Aubrey McClendon said the agreement would help reduce price volatility and accommodate substantial future growth the company anticipated from the Fayetteville Shale play.

Johnson said the shale isn’t like the soft shale used on roads. “It’s more like granite,” he said.

Technology wasn’t available a decade ago to extract the gas. Fore said it’s reasonable to believe technology will continue to raise the amount of gas that can be extracted from the shale.

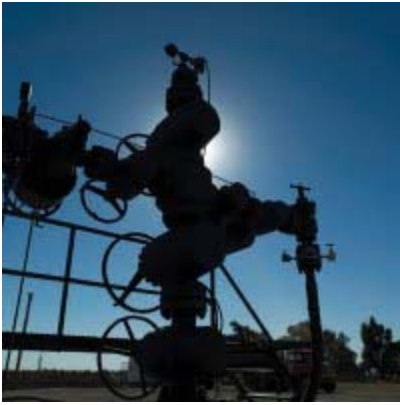
The pipeline will be built alongside the recently built Texas Gas Transmission Line. The right-of-way has already been secured for the new line, Fore said.

Posted in [Arkansas News Bureau](#), [NewsComments \(0\)](#)



[Who is looking out for you? Not legislators](#)

Posted on 19 November 2009



By Brett Hooton

Last week Representative Jonathan Dismang (R-Beebe) had a bill, [HB 1178](#), before the Agriculture, Forestry, and Economic Development Committee, which would protect the property rights of Arkansans. I've [previously written about this](#) bill. Unfortunately the majority of the members of this committee do not feel the same about your property rights as Representative Dismang. Instead they seem to worry more about [their \\$2,000 campaign check from Chesapeake](#). Representatives King, Rice, Dale, Betts, Nickels, and Sample voted for the bill.

So why did this bill which protects your rights fail? Representatives Everette, Reep, Davenport, Wills, Lowery, Reynolds, Cash, House, and Patterson. Three Representatives were not in attendance.

The vast majority of Democrats on this committee voted against this bill. Was this party politics or simply paying back the gas companies for their campaign contributions? If there were another reason to vote for gas companies and against Arkansans I'd love to hear it.

One of the more surprising votes was [Speaker Wills' no vote](#). He is from the Fayetteville Shale region. Does he really think voting against the property rights of Arkansans is what people in his district need or want? Maybe it is simply that Dismang didn't submit to the will of the Speaker and vote for the cigarette tax. I wonder if Dismang had voted for the cigarette tax if it would have earned him the vote of Rep. Wills and Reep (who sponsored the tax increase). Rep. Reynolds also lives in the Fayetteville shale region. I wonder what the Representative's constituents think about that.

I have two more interesting observations. As you might expect Chesapeake had their lobbyist on hand for the committee meeting. What is surprising is that they would frequently mouth questions to Representative [Lowery](#) (as noticed by several observers) who would then ask their questions. I would have preferred it if as a representative of the people in District 6 you would ask questions for them and not the simply regurgitate Chesapeake's talking points. The last point is that it has been [rumored that Representative Davenport is considering running for Land Commissioner](#). I wonder if his campaign slogan will have anything to do property rights.

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[Chesapeake out](#)

Posted on 29 October 2009

Chesapeake Energy, the natural gas drilling company with holdings in the **Fayetteville Shale** [announced today](#) they will not drill inside the upstate New York watershed, responding to public pressure and environmental concerns.

Over all, Mr. McClendon said, the company's holdings in the watershed are "a drop in the bucket" compared with the Marcellus field's potential. He suggested that Chesapeake had more to lose by drilling there than by forgoing it, even though he contended such drilling would do no harm.

"How could any one well be so profitable that it would be worth damaging the New York City water system?" he said.

Posted in [Arkansas Times Blog](#), [BlogsComments \(0\)](#)



[Chesapeake out](#)

Posted on 28 October 2009

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[Fill 'er up: At-home CNG refueling station a first](#)

Posted on 26 October 2009

Tags: [Chesapeake Energy](#), [Danny Games](#), [OEM Systems](#)



Danny Games, an executive with Chesapeake Energy, explains his home's car fueling station to North Little Rock Mayor Patrick Hays. (Photo by Jeremy Peppas/Stephens Media)

By Jeremy Peppas
Stephens Media

NORTH LITTLE ROCK — Danny Games fills up his SUV every night without ever having to leave home.

Earlier this year, the Chesapeake Energy executive had his 2009 Tahoe retrofitted to burn compressed natural gas, and had a Phill-brand natural gas home refueling unit installed in his carport. Games said as far as natural gas utility CenterPoint Energy knows, his home refueling station is the only one of its kind in the state.

When Games gets home at night, he runs a thin yellow cord from the unit and attaches it to his vehicle. While the exercise looks about the same as a car filling up at a gasoline pump, there's a big difference in the cost, he said.

"It has been about 50 percent less than the cost of unleaded," Games said.

Besides the cost, CNG is friendlier to the environment. A U.S. Department of Energy study determined CNG reduced carbon dioxide emissions by up to 30 percent and other pollutants by up to 90 percent.

"It burns cleaner. It doesn't produce the particulates you get from petroleum," Game said. "The beauty of this for Arkansas is that it is literally coming out of the ground here."

Arkansas ranked 12th among the 32 natural gas producing states in 2006 and 2007 when the state had 3.3 trillion cubic feet of proved natural gas reserves, the University of Arkansas Center for Business and Economic Research said in an August report citing the national Energy Information Administration.

Production has been buoyed in recent years by exploration in the Fayetteville Shale play in north-central Arkansas, one of the nation's 10-largest natural gas fields. Chesapeake Energy is among the largest players in the Fayetteville Shale play.

The CNG refueling unit Games had installed at his home cost about \$4,000 but came with a \$2,000 tax credit. He had a separate meter put in for it and also had a second electric meter installed because he wanted a complete accounting of the cost associated with having his SUV run on compressed natural gas.

OEM Systems, an Oklahoma company, converted the Tahoe. The conversion cost roughly \$12,000 and included some changes to the engine and installing a CNG tank where the spare tire is located on a regular Tahoe. The gasoline tank was left intact.

The CNG tank stores 9.2 gallons of natural gas, which Games said is enough to take his vehicle about 180 miles. If he empties the tank before reaching his destination, he could push a button on the front dash to switch to the gasoline tank without stopping.

The Phill unit takes the natural gas from the meter at Games' home and compresses it down to roughly 3,000 PSI, then a regulator installed in his vehicle's engine reverts the gas to regular atmospheric pressure to burn as fuel in the vehicle.

Games said putting a gallon of CNG in the tank takes about two hours. Totally filling an empty tank could take 18 hours, though Games said he drives to and from work — about 100 miles per day — without coming close to the vehicle's total range.

A spokesman with OEM said the only car produced in the U.S. equipped to burn CNG is the Honda Civic NGV. The cost of a new model starts around \$25,000 — compared to the \$23,800 price tag on a Civic hybrid and \$15,000 for a standard model — and the nearest dealer that stocks the vehicle is in New York.

In Arkansas, Little Rock National Airport has a commercial CNG refueling station and Arkansas Oklahoma Gas operates a CNG station in Fort Smith.

Games recently showed his home unit to North Little Rock Mayor Patrick Hays, Alderman Beth White, who lives down the street from Games in the Lakewood neighborhood, and Michael Drake, who works in the Mayor's office.

Hays arrived in his hybrid Honda, a veritable gas-guzzler compared to the Games' Tahoe.

Both Hays and Games said the real advantage for CNG is with commercial fleets.

Mass transit buses, school buses, street sweepers and garbage trucks are among the vehicles being made to run on CNG.

"It is the future," Hays said. "We have to get ready for it."

Earlier this year, the mayor failed in an attempt to persuade the Central Arkansas Transit Authority to convert its bus fleet to CNG. The Transit Authority concluded the \$5.2 million cost for replacing eight buses with CNG models and building two CNG refueling stations was too steep.

Posted in [Arkansas News Bureau](#), [NewsComments \(1\)](#)



CHESAPEAKE ENERGY ENTERS NEW GAS PARTNERSHIP

Posted on 28 September 2009

Posted in [Blogs](#), [Roby Brock's BizBlogComments \(0\)](#)



Lawmakers to tour water conservation projects

Posted on 25 September 2009

By Rob Moritz
Arkansas News Bureau

LITTLE ROCK — State lawmakers are scheduled to take a field trip, of sorts, next week to learn more about the groundwater shortage in eastern Arkansas and some of the conservation programs now under way to help ease the problem.

“We know water issues are going to be a big issue in Arkansas for years to come and we want them to see some of the practices already being implemented to address it,” Debbie Moreland, program director for the Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts, said Friday.

Tuesday’s day-long trip is timely because six counties in the state’s northeastern corner — Clay, Craighead, Cross, Greene, Poinsett and St. Francis — have submitted petitions seeking critical groundwater area designations because a portion of their underground water supply — the Alluvial Aquifer — is being depleted.

Several counties in the Grand Prairie region of eastern Arkansas and in South Arkansas are already designated as critical groundwater regions because of a nearly depleted underground aquifer, which is their source of water for both drinking and industry.

Declining groundwater levels and water quality related to nutrients, sediment and pesticides are a concern for many in eastern Arkansas.

The first stop on the trip will be the community of Albion in White County where members of the joint Senate and House Agriculture, Forestry and Economic Development committees will visit a water diversion site operated by Chesapeake Energy. The 25-acre pond is used in drilling for natural gas in that region.


Other stops during the day include the Plum Bayou Irrigation and Drainage Project in England and a minnow farm in Lonoke.

The various events will be hosted by representatives from the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission, the federal Natural Resources Conservation Service, University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture Public Policy Center, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, U.S. Geological Survey, Arkansas Forestry Commission and Chesapeake.

Mike Daniels, extension water quality specialist for the UA Division of Agriculture, said it is important for legislators and the public to know that preserving the underground water resources in the region is a top priority list.

“We’re engaged in research and education efforts to help all users of our water resources make better use of that water with ever-smaller impacts on the environment,” Daniels said in a news release. “We hope this day of demonstrations will help people understand what efforts are being made and put into practice to conserve our valuable water resources.”

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[Three agencies get Chesapeake gifts](#)

Posted on 14 August 2009

Three law enforcement agencies in Van Buren County are recent recipients of gifts from Chesapeake Energy.

Posted in [Local News](#), [News](#), [Van Buren County DemocratComments \(0\)](#)

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[Tyson foods turns profit](#)

Posted on 08 August 2009

By Roby Brock

Tyson Foods turned slightly lower sales into much bigger profits as the Springdale-based meat giant

reported profitability in all of its major segments for the first time in months.

Tyson Foods posted net income of \$134 million on sales of \$6.66 billion for its most recent quarterly reporting period, which ended June 30. One year ago, Tyson recorded a \$9 million profit on sales of \$6.85 billion.

Interim CEO Leland Tollett cited reduced inventory, improving operational efficiencies and disciplined management of working capital for the improved financials. He also said that a new CEO will likely come from within the company, but he did not expect a decision prior to the next fiscal year, which begins in October.

Dillard's same-store sales down

Dillard's Inc. announced that sales for the four weeks ended Aug. 1 were \$439 million, a decrease of 15 percent from the previous year. Dillard's has closed more than a dozen stores in the past year due to underperformance. Same-store sales fell 12 percent.

Superior industries swings to loss

Superior Industries International, which has two major U.S. operations in Fayetteville and Rogers, reported a \$20.8 million second-quarter loss on revenue of \$80.9 million. One year ago, the auto parts manufacturer posted a \$5.1 million profit on sales of \$162.4 million.

Superior, which makes aluminum wheel parts for Chrysler, General Motors and other carmakers, said it was hurt by shutdowns and plant closures in the auto industry.

Windstream earnings slide

Windstream Corp. reported second-quarter earnings of \$91 million, down 11 percent from one year ago when the Little Rock-based telecom provider posted earnings of \$102 million.

Quarterly revenues were \$753 million, down nearly 6 percent from the previous year when sales and service revenue neared \$800 million.

The company also announced that the Federal Communications Commission approved its acquisition of D&E Communications of Pennsylvania, a deal announced on May 11.

Murphy oil profits fall; management changes made

Murphy Oil Corp. posted second-quarter net income of \$158.8 million compared to net income of \$619.2 million one year ago.

Revenue for the El Dorado-based oil and gas company tumbled to \$4.55 billion from \$8.34 billion in last year's second quarter. Falling crude oil and gas prices explain some of the decline.

The company also announced a reorganization within its management ranks, effectively immediately. Five executives have shifted to new roles within the company.

Fayetteville shale drillers announce earnings

Chesapeake Energy reported a second-quarter profit of \$237 million on revenue of \$1.67 billion. Excluding one-time items, Chesapeake's net income was \$377 million compared to a \$597 million loss one year ago.

Chesapeake said it plans to boost its spending on drilling activities companywide from \$3 billion to \$3.2 billion for the rest of this year.

Southwestern Energy, the largest investor in the Fayetteville Shale play, disclosed quarterly net income of \$121.1 million, compared to \$136.6 million in the previous year's second quarter. The Houston-based energy company posted quarterly revenue of \$477.5 million.

Southwestern Energy CEO Harold Korell says that his company has doubled its production in the Fayetteville Shale in the last year, but expects drilling to slow during the next 18 months due to low natural gas prices.

Lincoln opposes house cap-and-trade

U.S. Sen. Blanche Lincoln, D-Ark., announced her opposition to cap-and-trade legislation in a Senate Finance Committee hearing. Lincoln said the House-passed Waxman-Markey bill was "deeply flawed."

Lincoln said, "I will not support similar legislation in the Senate. Here in the Senate, and in this committee, we must craft a proposal that works for all of America."

Poll: Arkansans weigh in on climate change

In a survey of 600 Arkansans, 47 percent said they believed in global warming, while 41 percent said there is disagreement on its effects. Fifty-six percent of those surveyed were unwilling to pay for renewable energy if it would increase their electric bills. Thirty-four percent said they would support higher bills for renewable energy. The poll has a margin of error of plus or minus 4 percent.

Arvest Bank expands into Kansas City

Arvest Bank entered into an agreement with Harrington West Financial Group, Inc. to purchase its Kansas City banking operations. The purchase is subject to receiving regulatory approvals, which are expected within 90 days.

According to a press release from Harrington, Arvest will pay a fixed premium of \$4.1 million for the Harrington Bank operations, unless the loans acquired or deposits assumed should fall below \$75 million, which would result in an adjustment to the premium paid by Arvest.

Polk Stanley & Wilcox group architects merge

Polk Stanley Rowland Curzon Porter Architects and Wilcox Group Architects have merged to form Polk Stanley Wilcox Architects.

The new entity combines both firms' design teams in Little Rock and Fayetteville. All employees will be part of the new firm, bringing the total number of employees to 40.

Roby Brock, a freelance journalist based in Little Rock, writes weekly for the Arkansas News Bureau.

His weekly television program airs at 10 p.m. Sundays in Central and Northwest Arkansas. His e-mail address is robby@talkbusiness.net; his Web site address is www.talkbusiness.net. □

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