

Rosebud residents search

Patrick Kolafa
The Drumheller Mail

Residents of Rosebud and area are beginning to find common ground with each other, and the energy companies drilling in the region.

Recently, developments in coal bed methane exploration have raised the concerns of some residents in the hamlet. EnCana and Bounty Developments have been working in the area.

Earlier this fall Bounty began to drill near the hamlet. Protests from impacted residents stopped this particular well from being drilled.

Linde Turner was one of the affected residents. The drilling could have possibly affected her water well. Since then, efforts by the community and the company have resulted in progress for both parties.

Turner says that once Bounty identified a problem, the company was very accommodating. There was a public meeting on November 16 and since then an agreement has been reached.

EnCana has been exploring in the area for many years. Luigi Vescarelli, community relations for EnCana explained that the company has about 200 wells in the area. The company has had down spacing approval for much of the region. There was a

small portion that EnCana was planning to submit an application for. The company's plan was to drill into another (Belly River) gas zone through existing wells. During the public consultation residents reacted to EnCana.

He said that normally EnCana would have posted this type of announcement in the local papers to consult the public. Vescarelli said in order to expedite the process, and because of the small area involved, they opted to consult landowners on a one-on-one basis.

"Because of the concern there, we decided not to proceed with it," said Vescarelli. "That (the application) has not been proposed to the AEUB (Alberta Energy Utilities Board) yet, we may proceed with it down the road, but that application has not been submitted."

EnCana hosted an open house on October 21. Many residents expressed their concerns with the development.

One of the major concerns is safety. Turner said that a resident has been hit by one of the vehicles as it passed through the hamlet, and there have also been some near misses. The noise of the extra traffic is also a concern.

Vescarelli said to help deal with the traffic, the company has posted signage and moni-

tored traffic.

Another concern raised was the noise generated by the added compressor stations that are needed to extract the methane, and their impact on the esthetics of the valley.

"If the compressor stations are close to the valley wall here in Rosebud, then the whole valley acts as an amphitheatre and will echo those noises throughout the whole valley.

It is distracting for the tourists and the people living in the valley," said long time resident LaVerne Erickson.

"A number of people have moved here to get away from the noise of the city, and then they hear

industrial noise all of the time."

Vescarelli says that the company has retained a third party to monitor the noise levels, and to make sure they remain below EUB noise limits.

Resident Jessica Ernst knows the problems with noise. One of the reasons she settled in the Rosebud Area was the quiet. One of her neighbours has a compressor on their land that she would like to see something done with. She says she is seeing a little more cooperation in the community, but there is still a long way to go. The most agreeable parties in town are also the ones that are least affected by the development.

"I think a lot of people in the community would prefer to work with EnCana—I would prefer that too. They have a long way to go before I can trust them again," said Ernst.

the area feel been dealt said that in ings it was methane es coming, but exploration i "Honesty is said.

Like in mo is a vital con ties. Chris

"It will benefit the community, the landowners and the energy companies if there is a more level playing field, and education does that."

Norma Laforte of WSR

concerned wit

"There have lems out Rosebud/Red they arose not ties that we l but from wor methane coal with the w process," said

He explained the extraction coal beds, a pr the seam to r place. The prof of the aquifers for water are in

"A lot of wa coal, and when doing these sh methane proje been some frac producing zones

He explained sure nitrogen is turing process.

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