Drilling begins in area RMs

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This water is pushed out and the rock cuttings and fluids are pushed up the sides of the drill. These cuttings and fluids are collected and sent to a shaker on the drill's platform and separated. The water is recycled back to the drill. The cuttings are tested through standard logging to gain a better understanding of the porosity or porosity of the rock and geological makeup of the area.

One might expect a noisy, chaotic environment at the site, but it was actually the contrary.

The rig itself looks monstrous in size, but according to Collet, this particular rig is quite small compared to others and is preferable due to its portability. For example, on this particular day they tore down camp from the previous site at 6 a.m. and were up and running at their new site by 11 a.m.

As with most industrial operations today, safety is a key factor when using machinery of this size. Collet, who has been at the exploration game, says that industrial accidents on sites such as these have decreased dramatically in recent years due to the increase in technology, the experience of rig workers and their knowledge of safety and equipment.

Finally, once the test well exploration is complete, the well is closed off and cleaned up begins. This job is the responsibility of Jerrod Hicks with Wellsite Environmental of Calgary. Throughout the process, their cleaning testing is done on the drilling fluid and cuttings. They are looking for hydrocarbons and other toxicants that might be released in the drilling. They also collect drilling fluids in vacuum trucks. The drilling fluid consists of calcium nitrate (fertilizer) which is spread onto the farmer’s land after completion. This creates a double benefit for the farmer. He has lease revenue and fertilized land when it is all said and done.

“Other than a small capped pipe you can hardly tell we were here”, says Collet. They have six more sites to drill, in approximately two to three months the testing phase will begin.

Leslie Winchester, Administrator with the RM of Cranbuck was enthusiastic about the drilling, she said, ‘It’s going to provide economic stability for our farmers and our community’.

We asked Jim Cross, Mayor of Davidson what his thoughts were about Panterra coming to the area. He said, ‘Absolutely great. It is certainly beneficial to the community. It will bring new people to town, create employment, increase wealth, nothing but good, good, good’.

(left to right) Herve Collet, Vice-President of Operations, Fred Rumak, President and Cory Bohnet, On-site Consultant for Panterra Resources Corp.

(Leader photo by W. Lee)