

Speaker to Discuss Technical, Operational Challenges in Developing the Marcellus Shale

Development of the Marcellus Shale poses unique technical and operational challenges for industry—challenges that must be overcome for extraction of the formation’s natural gas reserves to be economical, said William Ottaviani, chief operating officer of Rex Energy Corporation.

“While the Marcellus Shale has been known to exist for years, its commercial development is relatively new, so the industry is still going through a learning curve on how best to capitalize on this opportunity,”

Ottaviani said. “When you superimpose development of a high potential, unconventional natural gas play like the Marcellus Shale on an area better suited to smaller scale operations, challenges do arise.”

Ottaviani will discuss those challenges and some of the current efforts used to mitigate them in a talk, “Gas Pains: Technical and Operational Challenges in Developing the Marcellus Shale,” on Monday, April 6.

Open to the public, the talk is scheduled for 4 p.m. in 112 Walker. The presentation also will be available online at http://www.eesi.psu.edu/news_events/EarthtalksSpring09.shtml.

Based in State College, Rex Energy is an independent oil and gas company operating in the Appalachian and Illinois basins of the U.S. Last year, the company expanded its Marcellus Shale acreage to 62,000 leased acres, according to a release on the company’s 2008 results. Rex Energy successfully drilled several vertical test wells in 2008 and will complete its first of several planned horizontal wells early this year.

Ottaviani joined Rex Energy in September 2007. Prior to that, he worked for Chevron Corporation with assignments in California, Louisiana, Indonesia and Angola. At Chevron, he served in various management, engineering and operational capacities.

Ottaviani’s talk is part of the 2009 EarthTalks Spring Colloquium Series on “The Marcellus Shale Play: Boon or Burden?” that is sponsored by the Penn State Earth and Environmental Systems Institute (EESI), the College of Earth and Mineral Sciences (EMS), the College of Agricultural Sciences, the Environment and Natural Resources Institute, the Penn State Institutes of Energy and the Environment (PSIEE), the EMS Energy Institute and the John A. Dutton e-Education Institute.

All talks are archived and can be viewed at http://www.eesi.psu.edu/news_events/EarthtalksSpring09.shtml.