

Development of Marcellus Shale Promises Opportunities, Challenges for Communities

How development of the Marcellus Shale natural gas reserves will impact Pennsylvania communities and residents is the topic of the Monday, Feb. 16 EarthTalks, “Community and Economic Implications of Marcellus Shale Development.”

In the talk, Timothy W. Kelsey, Penn State professor of agricultural economics, will discuss the significant opportunities and challenges posed by extracting the Marcellus’ vast reservoir of natural gas.

“By looking at the experiences of other states with natural gas shales, we can identify some of the potential implications of Marcellus Shale development for Pennsylvania’s economy, businesses and workers, local governments and residents,” said Kelsey, also state program leader for economic and community development with Penn State Cooperative Extension.

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

Kelsey will look specifically at how communities and local economies were affected by the development of the Barnett Shale (Texas) and the Fayetteville Shale (Arkansas). He also will discuss the effects of natural gas production in Sublette County, Wyoming—the largest gas-producing county in that state.

While the natural gas industry often boosts local economies because jobs tend to be high paying, communities may not be prepared for the demand for housing and new public services that can accompany the economic growth, Kelsey said.

“Significant policy questions will be addressed, too,” he added. “This includes how to manage the ‘boom’ without a ‘bust’ and how to encourage the dollars generated to stay local.”

This is the third in 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) and the EMS Energy Institute. All talks are archived and can be viewed at http://www.eesi.psu.edu/news_events/EarthtalksSpring09.shtml.