

The DALLAS POST

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Company decides to relocate pumping station

Legislators' concerns during tour of another site prompt Chief to reconsider.

By SARAH HITE
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Representatives from Chief Gathering LLC hosted a tour of the Susquehanna East compressor station in Hop Bottom for the media and local legislators on Friday, Feb. 18.

Safety was the issue at large and, although those who gave the tour pressed on the facility's fail-safe design, state legislators had questions concerning the safety of the facility proposed to be built next to the Dallas School District campus.

Concerns raised by state Sen. Lisa Baker, R-Lehman Township, and state Rep. Karen Boback, R-Harveys Lake, about the proximity of the Dallas Township site to the four district schools – Wycallis Elementary, Dallas Elementary, Dallas Middle School and Dallas High School, have led officials with Chief to announce plans to relocate the proposed natural gas compressor away from the Dallas School District campus to “a more rural area of Dallas township.”

In a press release issued Wednesday, the company stated

its decision to explore alternate properties in the township was spurred by the visit the company hosted to the Hop Bottom site.

The 5-acre Hop Bottom station is located on Korban Road near a farm and contains several tanks, piping, a building that houses three compressor engines, a control center and a metering station.

The tour was hosted by Steve Hamilton, Chief's Appalachia region operations manager; Ted Wurfel, the vice president of Environmental, Safety and Regulatory Affairs for the company; and the site's sole operator, Harry Stanley.

Boback, her assistant, Carol Sweeney; Baker and her assistant, Tom Yonifski, attended the tour to ask questions and better understand the process of a compressor station. Lenox Township supervisors Fred Benson and James Taylor also toured the site.

The compressor engines were not running at the time of the visit because the natural gas going through the facility was at its peak compression and the engines were not needed.

The station gathers natural gas from wells that are 3 to 5 miles away. The gas goes through a number of processes before being



Operations manager Steve Hamilton explains the inner workings of a newly-erected c3 unit compressor station on a five-acre site in Hop Bottom.

CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

NEWS AT A GLANCE

Jan. 18, 2011 - A resident asks Dallas Township supervisors about a proposed natural gas compressor station to be built in the area at the board's regular meeting. Supervisors confirm that they and officials from the Dallas School District held separate meetings with representatives from Chief Gathering LLC about a compressor station planned for Hildebrandt Road near the district campus.

Jan. 21, 2011 - Chief Gathering LLC submits an application for special zoning exceptions to build a 5-acre natural gas compressor station on property owned by Robert Hayes at 49 Hildebrandt Road. The site, which is estimated to be 1,150 feet away from the school district property line, would include a metering facility, several tanks, a glycol dehydrator, a building to house compressor engines and a 100-foot radio tower.

Jan. 25, 2011 - Protesters take to the Dallas School District campus to hand out flyers in opposition of the proposed compressor station.

Feb. 1, 2011 - Nearly 40 residents brave icy roads to address the Dallas Township supervisors at their regular meeting. Residents ask numerous questions about the site but are given the same answer by Solicitor Thomas Brennan - the decision will be made by the township's zoning board, which must comply with the law in its decision.

Feb. 7, 2011 - About 80 residents and parents pack the Dallas School Board meeting room to urge the board to choose a stance against the proposed compressor station. The board, which usually does not allow comments at a work session meeting, allows parents to air concerns about the station for nearly two hours after announcing its opposition to the project. Prior to the meeting, Superintendent Frank Galicki said the board was neutral in its position, as it did not have enough information to take a stance.

Feb. 9, 2011 - A hearing begins for the Dallas Township Zoning Board to make a decision on Chief Gathering LLC's application for special zoning exceptions. Hundreds of parents and residents flood the auditorium of the Dallas Middle School as Ted Wurfel, vice president of environmental, safety and regulatory affairs for Chief, testifies and the school district's interests are represented by an attorney. Zoning board member Conrad Higgins is unable to actively participate in the proceedings, as his right-of-way agreement with Chief is seen as a conflict of interests in accordance with the state ethics commission. Higgins is granted the ability to provide a deciding vote for the three-member board, if it is needed. After two hours of testimony, the hearing is set to be continued on Feb. 23 and the zoning board agrees to

tour a compressor station owned by Chief.

Feb. 15, 2011 - Residents ask the Dallas Township supervisors to choose an alternate zoning board member for Higgins. Brennan explains an alternate would have been chosen at the township's annual reorganization meeting, and it would be difficult to choose an alternate in the middle of the hearing proceedings.

Feb. 16, 2011 - About 15 children from Dallas School District elementary schools gather at the Dallas Township municipal building to express their ill feelings about the proposed compressor station.

Feb. 18, 2011 - Representatives from Chief Gathering LLC host a tour of the Susquehanna East compressor station in Hop Bottom for local legislators and the media. Prior to the event, The Dallas Post learns that the Dallas Township Zoning Board and Dallas School District officials will not attend the tour because Chief decided to revise its application and resubmit at a later date.

Feb. 23, 2011 - Chief Gathering LLC announces that, after listening to the concerns of state Sen. Lisa Baker, state Rep. Karen Boback and the community, the company will research alternate locations for the compressor station. The company confirms that a metering facility will still be built in the area near the district campus.



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Zach Holthaus practices soccer in his backyard in Dallas but will soon learn more skills at a tournament in Portugal.

Dallas soccer player heads to Portugal

Zachary Holthaus will play as part of the United Soccer Training Academy.

By SARAH HITE
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Zachary Holthaus could tell you about how excited he is to play soccer in Portugal this April - if he would put down his soccer ball for just a minute.

The dynamic 8-year-old of Dallas was recently chosen to play soccer as part of the United Soccer Training Academy to compete in the Mundialito Tournament in Portimão, Portugal. The tournament will feature teams of boys from five continents and more than 30 countries.

Sue Holthaus, Zach's mother, was more than a little surprised when she learned her son had won a coveted spot on the team.

The tryouts, held at the Wyoming Valley Sports Dome in Wilkes-Barre, last four hours and featured more than 400 boys kicking their way to the top of the pack.

Zach said the boys had to play scrimmages and perform drills, such as a three-person

pass and defend, one-touch and two-touch passing and quick feet movement demonstrations.

Sue said the club needed two teams for the tournament - one team comprised of boys born between 1999 and 2000, and another of those born between 2001 and 2002. Four hundred fifty boys tried out; the USTA directors narrowed it down to 50, then 19, then just nine, which included boys from Ghana and Brazil who were previously chosen.

Sue thought the worst for Zach, who's been playing the game since he was about 4 years old.

"There are just so many great kids out there," she said. "I didn't think he would make it."

Just when the family's hope was running out, a week later at a regular USTA practice, Sue got tipped off by the director of the program - not by her son, who learned hours earlier that he had been chosen to the team.

"(Zach) didn't even tell me. He just went back to practice," said Sue. "I thought that the fact that he'd made the tryout was a big deal all of its own."

The family had a tough decision to make upon receiving the news. The Holthaus family

SPAGHETTI DINNER

Sue Holthaus will host a spaghetti dinner from 4 to 7 p.m. on Wednesday, March 23 in the Dallas Middle School cafeteria as a fundraiser to help with Zach's costs for his trip to play soccer in Portugal. Tickets cost \$7 and walk-ins and take outs are welcome. For more information or to purchase tickets, contact Sue at 675-0537.

had fallen on some hard times near the end of last year, and Sue was worried the family would not be able to afford the trip.

"It was a big decision to make," she said.

Sue said she realized that Zach might not have another opportunity like this, so she and her husband, Ryan, decided to take the 3,500 mile trek to the South American country.

Funding is still an issue for the Holthaus family, so several fundraisers have been to offset the costs of Zach's trip. Sue said it will cost about \$2,300 for Zach to participate in the tournament, which includes airfare, hotel costs and tournament fees.

"We didn't want to deprive him of this opportunity," said Sue. "He might not ever get the chance to do this again."

In addition to selling candy bars and lottery calendars at Thomas' Food Town in Shaver-

town, Sue has set up a donation account at the Citizens Bank on Main Street in Dallas. The account is called the Zach for Portugal fund, and anyone can donate any amount at any time.

Financial worries aside, Zach and Sue are excited for the trip and have been preparing for their arrival in Portugal since they found out they were going.

Sue, who works at the Dallas Middle School, said the language teachers have been good resources for learning some key phrases she and her family may need while overseas.

"All I really need to know is, 'Where's the bathroom?'" she said.

The only member of the Holthaus family not planning to make the trip? Eleven-year-old Hollie.

"She doesn't want to be hanging out with her parents the whole time," laughed Sue.



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