

# The DALLAS POST

50¢

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## Dallas parents continue fight against station

By SARAH HITE  
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Dallas parents are still worried about the effects of natural gas drilling in the area, and they're ready to fight - again.

About 25 concerned residents met recently with members of the Gas Drilling Awareness Coalition for "Pipelines 101," an educational meeting to discuss the gas drilling industry and how it's affecting the area.

Parents also wanted information on how they can rally against Chief Gathering LLC's latest proposal for Dallas Township, which includes plans to build a metering facility near the Dallas School District campus.

Chief submitted an amended application for special zoning exceptions on Feb. 24 to locate two metering buildings, two flow control buildings, a 100-foot communications tower, a 10-foot flare and an 8,000 gallon mercaptan tank about 1,100 feet away from the Dallas schools.

The company decided to relocate its previously planned seven-unit compressor station, but that decision has not made parents any less worried about the safety of their children.

"We need to be educated before we fight," said Diane Pocomo of Kingston Township, whose two children attend Wyckalls Elementary. "I'm happy that (the compressor station is) moving but I'm still not educated about metering stations."

Dallas resident and GDAC member Norm Tomchak took attendees on a tour through Dallas and surrounding areas via the Transco interstate pipeline, which runs three feet under residential and business complexes from Route 118 to Route 309. The entire pipeline, which handles a pressure of about 1,000 pounds per square inch, runs from Texas to New York.

Tomchak told residents that many structures in the area were built after the completion of the 24-inch, 1950s-era pipeline, and its age is cause for concern.

The old line will need to be welded to connect it to incoming pipelines from Springville and Tunkhannock Township, and this could make it even

### UP NEXT ...

The zoning hearing will be held at 7 p.m. March 14 in the Dallas Township Municipal Building for Chief Gathering LLC's amended application to build a metering facility near the Dallas schools. The Dallas School Board will also meet at 7 p.m. March 14 for a regular meeting in the administration building.

more vulnerable to leaks or even an explosion, he said.

As for metering stations, Tomchak described them as "little sheds on a skid," and said he hasn't been able to find out much more from companies directly.

"We've had a heck of a time figuring out the truth," he said.

He said the facilities are sensitive to noise and operated remotely from faraway distances, much like what Tomchak experienced when he worked for the Delaware and Hudson Railway. He said dispatchers were changing local train tracks from Minneapolis, Minn.

"It's all electronic, and it all fails," he said.

In addition to the discussion about technology, parents were also schooled on mercaptan, the odorant used in natural gas, which will be located on the site.

GDAC member and resident Dr. Al Rodriguez said prolonged exposure to mercaptan can cause headaches, dizziness and seizures, and he said children with asthma would be at a higher risk for feeling the chemical's effects.

The morning of the meeting, children at Willard Street Elementary School in West Scranton were released for over an hour because of a mercaptan leak. In December, students at Wyoming Valley West High School had to be sent home early due to a UGI Penn Natural Gas leak of the odorous agent.

GDAC member Diane Dreier told parents to organize and tell everyone they know to put pressure on the school board to oppose this "industrial act."

"We can't do it alone," she said.

Cathy Wega, a Dallas School Board member, attended the meeting for more information

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CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK PHOTOS/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Samantha Kern pours vinegar and baking soda into her volcano at the Dallas Elementary School Annual Science Fair.

## These scientists are not MAD

By SARAH HITE  
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There were no mad scientists at the 17th annual Dallas Elementary Science Fair on March 3 - just hundreds of bright kids learning more about the world around them.

Deanna Habibe, chair of the yearly expo, said the event drew more participation from children ages 5 through 12 than ever before - 243 students worked on 168 projects displayed throughout the school gymnasium.

Projects ranged from the innovatively unique, such as the creation of kitchen biofuel, to the timelessly classic, like the old-fashioned baking soda and vinegar volcano. Students were seen ushering in potted plants, a hamster and even a rooster, while others chose to use food, like chocolate and Jell-o, for scientific fun.

Five-year-old Floyd Sutton, of Dallas, decided to mimic the heater in his basement for his project. The kindergartener created two heating systems - one with cardboard and one with plastic - to see which would be more effi-

cient.

"They're both the same," he said, pointing to the tiny temperature gauges he hooked up to the experiment. "I thought plastic would be warmer."

Every so often, a blast of pinkish "lava" would burst about a foot in the air from the top of Samantha Kern's homemade magma machine.

Nine-year-old Kern, of Dallas, stood faithfully by her paper mache volcano, dumping baking soda, food coloring and vinegar inside in the hopes it would erupt like Mount St. Helens or even Mount Vesuvius, which destroyed the cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii in 79 A.D.

"More vinegar," her mother said periodically, camera in hand for photos of the next rousing rupture.

But there's more to learn about the classic experiment than just combining the two household products for a slightly smelly spew.

"When the lava comes out, there can be rocks in it," said Kern of real volcano eruptions.

Garrett Pall, 10, and Mikail Krochta, 11, both of Dallas, wore



Floyd Sutton recreated his own heating system at home with paper and plastic pipe then lit and ventilated it with 6-volt batteries.

heavy duty gloves when performing experiments for friends with their project of choice - dry ice.

Krochta had never been around with the frozen carbon dioxide before choosing the experiment, but Pall said he's been interested in dry ice ever since it came to his house with a shipment of Omaha Steaks about four years ago.

"I loved how it felt," he said.

The boys and their fathers cut pieces of the dry ice with a small saw and put it in various atmospheres. Krochta enjoyed putting it in warm blue-colored water the most because it made the liquid look like a smoky, foreboding beverage.

"We're just doing experiments on what it is and how it works," he said.

Dallas Elementary Principal Thomas Traver walked around the expo, which ran concurrently with the school's book fair and summer vendor display.

"There's got to be more than 600 people here," he said, checking out a few projects.

Traver was very impressed with the students' creativity in their projects, and he appreciated the use of the scientific method.

"They're following the scientific method, and this will impress upon the students to carry it over into their lives," he said.



AMANDA HRYCYNIA/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

A new Geisinger clinic on Dorchester Drive in Dallas will replace the one currently located in the Dallas Shopping Center.

## Geisinger clinic opening soon

By SARAH HITE  
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### GEISINGER-DALLAS AT A GLANCE

The new clinic will open on Monday, March 28. Here's some more information about the facility.

Address: 114 Lt. Michael Cleary Dr., off Dorchester Drive, Dallas

Size: 17,000 square feet

Practice by the numbers: Four family practice providers, three residents, six nurses, 11 support staff, more than 5,000 active patients

Current services: Family practice, laboratory

New services: Pediatrics, general surgery, sports medicine and orthopedics, caresite pharmacy, radiology (X-rays, ultrasound)

Services coming soon: Nutrition counseling in July, after-hours urgent care in July, women's health services (obstetrics, gynecology) in October

The Geisinger clinic in the Dallas Shopping Center is moving to a new, larger space at the end of this month, and patients will experience more specialty care from the same familiar faces.

Geisinger Health System broke ground for a new 17,000 square foot building located just off Dorchester Drive in Dallas Township last June. Patients will be seen at the clinic beginning March 28.

The new clinic will offer more services for its patients in addition to family practice and laboratory services. Pediatrics, gen-

eral surgery, sports medicine and orthopedics, an on-site pharmacy and a radiology department are just some of the added services Geisinger plans to offer those in the Back Moun-

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