

The DALLAS POST

50¢

WILKES-BARRE, PA.

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AN EDITION OF THE TIMES LEADER

Concerns rise as gas is released

By SARAH HITE
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Residents urged supervisors and natural gas representatives Tuesday to increase communication in the township after an incident at the Transco interstate gas pipeline left neighbors concerned for their safety.

Fairgrounds Road resident Sonia Maslowski told supervisors that her husband, John, heard a loud noise on Sept. 22 from the Transco pipeline construction site where workers are tapping the Williams Springville Gathering Line off Hildebrandt Road.

She said John had also smelled odorized natural gas from 100

"I don't know what kind of list of numbers you have here, but by the time you would go through those channels, the people that are going to be affected, and the students, if they're going to be affected, are going to be gone."

Sonia Maslowski
Dallas Township resident

yards away, which prompted her to call 911. Maslowski said Luzerne County 911 told her the company notified the county that a natural gas release would occur that day as part of scheduled work. Two ambulances were sent to Maslowski's residence as a precaution.

Maslowski's neighbor, Jane Tolomello, said she contacted Dallas School District Superintendent Frank Galicki regarding the matter because the campus is about 1,800 feet away from the site. Tolomello said Galicki then contacted the township, and someone from the office told him

there was no natural gas release in the area.

Tolomello continued to ask supervisors if they thought she was credible as a neighbor of the construction. She said she didn't feel her concerns were taken seriously when she approached township officials the day of the incident.

She said she was especially worried about the safety of the nearly 2,800 students as well as for faculty and staff housed at the nearby Dallas School District and wanted to know if the school district has an evacuation plan in

See GAS, Page 12

Dallas Township residents were concerned last week when a natural gas release was reported.



Church leaders discuss school

By SARAH HITE
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About 30 leaders from 11 area churches gathered at Leggio's Restaurant in Dallas on September 27 to discuss the budding Christian school Rock Solid Academy.

The breakfast was organized by the school's director, Mark DiPippa, as a way to reach out to local churches and the families they serve. DiPippa hoped to spark interest in the school and begin raising funds for its \$1.5 million founding campaign, which will conclude in December.

DiPippa told the audience that the school's board of directors has already approved a mission statement and statement of faith for the proposed kindergarten through eighth-grade school. He and others began the groundwork for the school last year and he hopes it will open in August 2012.

An overview of the curriculum has also been completed with input from local teachers, administrators and other education professionals, he said. Jerry Harteis, a member of the school's board of directors representing Back Mountain Harvest Assembly Church, told audience members the school is sorely needed during the "demise of culture and American values."

"This is about rescuing our children," said Harteis.

He continued that, though the local public education system "has its hands tied," the new school will offer moral and religious guidance for students in addition to a rigorous curriculum.

Harteis said the newly-built Dallas High School, which officially opened this school year, doesn't change the type of education students receive in a secular environment.

"I liken it to putting clean clothes on someone who forgot to take a shower," he said.

DiPippa said there is no set location for the school yet, though he would like to have the building located in the Back Mountain. He hopes the school will be able to house grades kindergarten through 12 by 2013.

Though much of the school's curriculum and activities will reflect Christian beliefs, DiPippa said non-Christian students will be encouraged to enroll as well, but staff will need to be of Christian faith.

"I think we have to have Christian leaders in those positions," said DiPippa. "I just think it's the right thing to do at the leadership level."

He hopes to finance the school through tuition alone - DiPippa said the school wants to avoid "subsidizing" the churches in order to be an independent entity.

He would also like to develop a scholarship program through local churches to aid students who may not be able to afford the school.

Class sizes will be small -

See SCHOOL, Page 12



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Jerry Harteis, head of the board of education for the newly-organized Rock Solid Academy, speaks to area pastors at a breakfast presented by school officials.



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK PHOTOS/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Bernie Bronsberg, Greg Brown and Andrew Stocker aren't quite sure what to think of an ice sculpture made especially for the new Dallas High School dedication ceremony.

Getting a good look at the new building

By SARAH HITE
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After a month-long delay caused by two tropical storms, ... the Back Mountain community got its first official look at the new Dallas High School during a dedication ceremony on Monday, Oct. 3.

Two words could summarize what many thought of the new Dallas High School building: big and beautiful.

After a month-long delay caused by two tropical storms, administrators finally had the opportunity to hear those comments when the Back Mountain community got its first official look at the new Dallas High School during a dedication ceremony on Monday, Oct. 3.

Those involved in the project, including Superintendent Frank Galicki and other administrators, members of the school board, the project architect, community members on the design committee and others all spoke at the program, which was held in the auditorium prior to a ribbon-cutting and key presentation.

School Board President Bruce Goeringer said the building was six years in the making, and made a point to thank everyone who has been involved in the process.

"This is something we can all be proud of, something we can all be proud of as a community, and it's something that we all accomplished together," he said.

Sandra Sprau, a math teacher

and member of the design committee, shared memories of the old high school building, including her first days there as a student and when she taught her sons in class.

"This is a story all mothers can appreciate - in 1995, when my oldest son Dwayne entered the high school and wouldn't even acknowledge me," she said, laughing. "He pretended like he didn't even know who I was. Unlike my middle son Keith, who would say during class, 'Wait, mom, explain that again.'"

Community members enjoyed refreshments in the cafeteria before meandering down the halls of the 230,000 square foot facility for a better look at the new high school.

Reo Cheshire, of Dallas, enjoyed some hors d'oeuvres with his 11-year-old daughter, Annalise, before taking a stroll around the complex. "It's definitely impressive," he said. "It seems like it was designed



Friends and well-wishers gather for the dedication of the new Dallas High School building. Tables were set with candles and white tablecloths and a catered reception followed the ceremony.

very well."

Cheshire said he and Annalise kept track of the building process, from the groundbreaking to the tearing down of the old building to the dedication. He said the construction process had some adverse effects on every day life at the schools, but the new building was worth any hassles.

"There was some (traffic) congestion when they opened, but it's all part of a good thing," he said. Annalise can't wait to be a student in the new building.

"She just got to the middle school," said her father. "We don't want to rush it."

Pam Wintersteen, of Dallas, toured the second floor with her 11-year-old daughter Erika, and tried to explain what the old building

looked like before she graduated in 1987.

"My favorite room was the chorus room, because of all the fun we had in there," she said. "I'm very impressed with the new building - it's huge."

Janice Borton, a retired middle school teacher, loved the coloring and layout of the new school.

"It's so modern," she said. "I think they considered what all kids like and need in a school."

