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Contact: Chris Csikszentmihályi
Director Center for Future Civic Media
617-299-9831
extract@media.mit.edu

Julie Archer
WV Surface Owners' Rights Organization
304-346-5891
julie@wvsoro.org

**Landman Report Card Website Launched:
A Resource to Support Citizens Negotiating with Big Energy**

Cambridge, MA — A Landman Report Card web site has been launched by MIT's Center for Future Civic Media, where researchers develop novel technologies for communities. The Landman Report Card is an easy-to-use web-based resource that helps landowners learn and share information about landmen for oil and gas companies that are approaching them to sign oil and gas leases.

“There’s a real need for this kind of information,” said Chris Csikszentmihályi, Director of the Center for Future Civic Media. “Recent findings in New York State and Wyoming indicate that the impacts of natural gas mining are profound and lasting, and we are just starting to learn about the long-term effects of hydraulic fracturing on human health, property, and the environment.”

“Out of state ‘landmen’ whose job is to get the best lease terms for the companies they represent are now combing many parts of the West Virginia insisting on ten year primary terms, and pressuring landowners to sign immediately,” said Julie Archer of the West Virginia Surface Owners’ Rights Organization. “Landowners need time and information to negotiate good leases because the secondary terms could affect what their great grandchildren can do with their land.”

Landman Report Card (www.landmanreportcard.com) allows users to submit reports about individual landmen and their companies, browse report cards submitted by other users, contact other users, and use the site as their own private diary of interactions with these industry representatives. The site also provides links to information about best practices for land professionals, information about the gas leasing process, and information to help landowners prepare for a visit from a landman.

The West Virginia Surface Owner’s Rights Organization also has information at its website (www.wvsoro.org) for landowners who are approached by landmen about signing leases.

“Knowledge is key”, says Csikszentmihályi. “Landman Report Card gives citizens in mineral-rich areas of the country a way to learn about the professional negotiators knocking on their doors. A decision to sign a lease — or not — can change a family’s life and their community, so the more people know about landmen and their business practices the better prepared they can be to negotiate. We have found that landowners in a community where drilling is just starting are often very surprised to read about the experiences of people who have been living with drilling for decades.”

Landman Report Card was produced in collaboration with the West Virginia Surface Owners Rights Organization, and other citizens' alliances in Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio as well as EARTHWORKS/Oil and Gas Accountability Project.

The Center for Future Civic Media at MIT develops new technologies and social systems for sharing, prioritizing, organizing, and acting on information. The Center supports and fosters civic media and political action; serves as an international resource for the study and analysis of civic media; and coordinates community-based test beds both in the United States and internationally.

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