



## West Virginia Surface Owners' Rights Organization

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[www.wvsoro.org](http://www.wvsoro.org)

**For Immediate Release**

**October 14, 2008**

### **Educational Meeting on Oil & Gas Leasing Set for October 30 in Doddridge County**

Local organizers for the WV Surface Owners' Rights Organization (WV SORO) have planned an educational meeting on oil & gas leasing at the Doddridge County Park for Thursday, October 30, 2008 starting at 6:30 PM. Dave McMahon, a public interest lawyer and founder of WV SORO, and Alvin Engelke, an experienced mineral owner/well operator and WV Farm Bureau board member, will make presentations, with a question and answer period to follow.

The meeting will focus on oil & gas leasing for those who are considering leasing their minerals and will provide mineral owners with information on bad provisions in leases and discuss additional surface owner protections that landowners can insist on before signing a lease. Most mineral owners don't know that there are usually bad provisions in leases that can and should be crossed out and that they can insist on lease add-ons or addendums that provide additional protections for their land.

This spring WV SORO started getting call after call with questions from landowners who had been approached by landmen with "standard" oil & gas leases for them to sign. In response, WV SORO launched a campaign to educate landowners about leasing the minerals under their land, which included holding and attending local meetings around the state over the past several months to discuss leasing issues. WV SORO also has a guide for citizens who are approached by oil & gas companies that explains more about leasing and things to consider before signing a lease. Written by Mr. McMahon, it is based on his years of experience working with surface owners' and the abuses and problems they have dealt with because of bad leases that don't offer adequate surface protections. Those fortunate enough to own their minerals can negotiate these protections into their leases if they are made aware of this before they sign. In addition, the group has a 'Leasing' page at its website ([www.wvsoro.org](http://www.wvsoro.org)) with other information such as links to forums where people can exchange information with their neighbors on what is being offered for up-front payments and royalty percentage.

Most importantly, when landowners are considering leasing their minerals we strongly urge them to think long term -- the money may be attractive but they need to think about what they or future generations may want to do with the land. There are also environmental and quality of life issues associated with oil & gas drilling that must be considered. These include the potential for groundwater contamination, the impact on the land (Marcellus well sites are larger and can disturb up to 5 acres each), water use (drilling and fracing techniques being used for Marcellus wells are water intensive) and wastewater disposal. Many of these issues will be discussed at the October 30 meeting.

**Who:** WV Surface Owners' Rights Organization (WV-SORO)  
**What:** Educational meeting on oil & gas leasing  
**When:** Thursday, October 30, 2008 at 6:30 PM  
**Where:** Doddridge County Park, Snowbird Road, Smithburg, WV (near West Union)  
**Contact:** Sharon Marshok (304)-623-1245 or Nancy Powers (304)-623-0482  
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