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# Promise of good jobs a sham

June 10, 2012

The Herald-Star

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To the editor:

I grew up in Steubenville, leaving the area 35 years ago, but returning frequently to visit family. Recently, I was optimistic about the prospective growth of jobs based on promises made by the shale fracking conglomerate which desperately promised anything to attain fracking rights in the region.

The promise of well-paying jobs by the shale fracking lobby is proving as empty as the heads of those who believed it from the outset. Take a look around and ask friends, neighbors and relatives how many permanent, well paying jobs with benefits have been created.

I have family members who have sought out these jobs, positions that were tracked down through local college and trades counselors which helped arrange interviews. At the interviews (attended by my nephews), the recruiters were blatantly disrespectful of the applicants and made joking statements about the lack of work ethic and discipline among Ohio Valley workers. The recruiters (from the Southwest U.S.) touted that they could get twice as much work out of Texas and Oklahoma men and women as from those of the Ohio Valley, and at a much lower pay rate. Both the cadre of students and applicants and the counselors were understandably appalled, angry and frustrated.

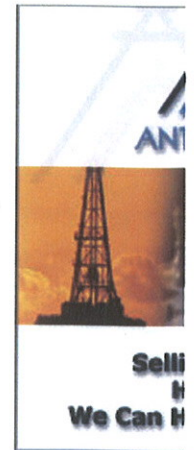
While visiting Steubenville last month, I saw a sample of the cheap-labor, itinerant, no benefit work force at a local restaurant. A truck brought them in by batch for a meal. They could not speak a lick of English among the seven of them, all of whom wore coveralls emblazoned with the name of their drilling company. While home, I asked many folks about the hiring of local men and women for these jobs and none had any success stories to relate.

From my casual observations, the bottom line appears to be that many folks may have sold their souls to the devil with the hope of the Ohio Valley becoming an overnight boomtown. Instead, the promise of the corporate vultures seems may result in only a topographical and subterranean wasteland scourged by mercenary

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investor interlopers using mainly cheap, foreign labor.

As an intermittent visitor, I can readily perceive this; and I encourage residents to take off the blinders. I respectfully ask the city and county leaders and employment counselors to request a full list of all positions filled by local residents, including pay rate and benefits. If you think such a list would produce comparable statistics to the pay and benefits of local industry workers, then I have some wetlands in Louisiana in which you may be interested in.

Jim Vallone

Crofton, Md.

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