



Video: Laborers' union challenges Chesapeake to hire locals

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Posted May 10, 2012 @ 06:15 PM

Last update May 10, 2012 @ 06:53 PM

CARROLLTON — Oil and gas drilling in Ohio's Utica shale formation is expected to create thousands of new jobs.

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Members of the Laborers' union contend that some of those jobs are going to out-of-state companies.

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On Thursday morning, union members stood across the street from a Chesapeake Energy well site in Lee Township, picketing because the drilling company has hired Texas-based STI Services to build a gas line that will service the well.

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"We're trying to get local jobs for local people," said Curt Mayle, business manager for Laborers' Local 1015 based in Canton.

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Chesapeake counters that local people are helping to build the gas gathering lines that run from producing wells to a main line. The gathering lines will connect Chesapeake wells in Carroll County to a pipeline system.

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Company spokesman Pete Kenworthy said eight bid requests were sent out for the pipeline job. STI Services — using some local workers — is the company Chesapeake awarded the project.

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But Laborers' union members contend STI Services relies on out-of-state workers and pays sub-standard wages.

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About 40 Laborers' union members waved at traffic and held signs that read "Local construction jobs to local workers" and "Ohio shale, Ohio jobs." Union members were at the site for about three hours. Last week they conducted a similar protest at a Chesapeake well site in Jefferson County.

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Pipeline construction is a job that can be done by local workers, said Daniel Kurczi, a marketing representative for the Laborers' union. There are companies and workers in the area ready and willing to work for Chesapeake, he said.

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The Laborers' union has agreements with construction companies to provide workers for projects, including pipeline and road work that is a big part of oil field development. Kurczi said the union approached Chesapeake and two of its pipeline contractors — STI Services and Progressive — about hiring local members.

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While some companies that contract with the Laborers have won jobs with Chesapeake, the driller appears to prefer out-of-state companies, Kurczi said. "If you're not in the inner circle you don't get much of the work, no matter how capable you are."

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Laborers' union members are confident they can build pipelines for Chesapeake. Laborers' union members helped build the Rockies Express Pipeline, which runs from Colorado and crosses five states before ending in Monroe County in southeastern Ohio. Kurczi noted

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that Laborers' union members have been doing the kind of work needed for pipeline construction for 100 years.

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Kenworthy said Chesapeake awards work based on vendor qualifications and value. Safety performance record, scheduling and cost are some of the factors considered when weighing a vendor's qualifications.

"Our qualification and award practices do not discriminate between union and non-union companies, but rather focus on the vendor's past performance, capabilities and cost to perform the defined work," Kenworthy said.

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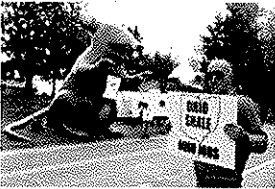
Chesapeake has been developing the Utica shale formation in eastern Ohio since 2010, drilled its first well in Carroll County last year, and has established regional offices in Canton. The company boasts 300 employees in Ohio.

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