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Local drilling jobs sought

July 25, 2012

By MIKE PALMER - Staff Writer , Times Leader

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

Members of the Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA) contend that a majority of those jobs are going to out-of-state companies.

Union members from LIUNA Steubenville Local 809 and Newcomerstown Local 134 gathered Tuesday morning at the Dominion East Ohio (DEO) pipeline construction site in Stock Township at the intersection of Wallace Road and US 250 East of Cadiz. The group stated they were picketing because the company has hired West Virginia-based Bruce Allen Inc. to build a gas line that will service the nearby Marcellus Shale gas wells in Harrison County.

"We're trying to get local jobs for local people," said Clint Powell, business manager for Laborers' Local 809 based in Steubenville.

Chuck Penn, Media Relations Manager of Dominion's Gas Transmission division said Dominion East Ohio has a long history of investing in Ohio.

"We have an excellent track record of investing in and supporting Ohio communities - and that record is continuing," Penn responded. "For example, DEO is currently making a very significant capital investment of more than \$200 million this year alone in Ohio on various infrastructure projects."

"This is one of the many projects that DEO awards every day through a competitive bidding process," stated Penn. "This contract is for work on a gathering line project in Harrison County, Ohio. Contracts are awarded based on the ability to perform, past performance and the ability to meet established guidelines and standards."

Penn also referenced that his company currently employs more than 1,500 Ohioans.

But Laborers' union members contend Bruce Allen Pipeline Contractors relies on out-of-state workers and pays sub-standard wages.

Approximately 40 laborers stood alongside a giant inflatable rat, 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 four hours. In May, they conducted a similar protest at Chesapeake well sites in Jefferson and Carroll Counties.

"Pipeline construction is a job that can be done by local workers,"

Martins Ferry, OH



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said Powell, "There are companies and skilled workers in the area ready and willing to work for Dominion or any other company."

"This is not just a union problem, this is just 5.5 miles of 30 inch pipeline, this is just a snippet of a project that could potentially end up being hundreds of miles of new high pressure pipelines." Powell added that DEO is planning approximately 300 miles of wet gas pipeline for use by Utica Shale producers. "We were promised that the gas boom would provide jobs for local workers and we are here representing our local people who are struggling to find work."

"Many of us here today are making tough decisions every day. Do we pay our bills or buy food and medicine?" he stated. "We are losing our homes and our vehicles. We are not just going to sit at home and let this happen."

Laborers' union members are confident they can build pipelines for Dominion. 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. Powell noted that Laborers' union members have been doing the kind of work needed for pipeline construction for 100 years.

"Our company has a state-of-the-art training facility in Central Ohio teaching members year round the intricacies of pipeline work," Powell added. "If this company had hired even 10 of our well qualified construction people, we would not have a problem and we would not be here."

Powell stated that one area company has been fulfilling their promise to utilize local labor. "MarkWest Energy has been great. They have used our local laborers. We have been working on one of their small processing plants near Flushing and look forward to a continued partnership with them as they expand in the area."

"All of this is a concerted effort to highlight to the public that shale gas industry jobs are not going to community members," Powell said in conclusion. "We do our homework when it comes to who is putting and not putting Ohioans to work because as we are witnessing energy companies will say one thing and do another when it comes time to actually put local people to work."

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