

Department of Environmental Protection Southwest Region-Regional Roundtable

October 17, 2013

DEP Southwest Regional Offices, 400 Waterfront Drive, Pittsburgh, PA

Southwest Regional Community Relations Coordinator John Poister called the meeting to order at 10:32 a.m. Poister outlined the format of the meeting and the rundown of the updates and topics to be presented.

Poister introduced Ed Motycik of DEP's Mine Subsidence Program to explain the department's mine subsidence insurance process. DEP has provided low cost mine subsidence insurance since 1960. More than 60,000 buildings are insured, but Ed estimates there are over 1 million homes and commercial structures built over abandoned mines. Despite a concerted effort to inform the public, it has been difficult to sell homeowners on the need for the insurance—that is until subsidence occurs. Ed explained that he has recently been successful in signing up over 500 residents of Mount Oliver. There was a subsidence incident in that community in July. Ed used some visuals to show how subsidence occurs. He also had some informational handouts.

Poister was preparing to introduce an update on the Permit Application Consultation Tool (PACT) when an alarm sounded in the building and we were told to evacuate. There was a strong odor of natural gas outside the 500 Waterfront Drive building (where the roundtable was being held) and in the vicinity of the 400 Waterfront Drive building (where most of the DEP offices are located). The odor was strong enough that the offices were closed for the day and the Roundtable was ended.

The main topic presentation will be postponed to the next Roundtable session which is scheduled for April 17, 2014.