

## Central Susquehanna Oil & Gas Expo Set for May 7

*This column is presented weekly by the Public Education sub-committee of the Clinton County Natural Gas Task Force in an effort to provide accurate, up-to-date information on activities surrounding the Marcellus Shale formation and the natural gas exploration industry. For more information on Task Force activities, visit the Task Force page on the Clinton County government website at [www.clintoncountypa.com](http://www.clintoncountypa.com).*

As the natural gas industry continues to grow, more and more local business owners and entrepreneurs are trying to get their foot in the door. As a result, many local communities are organizing business-to-business gas expositions, or “expos”, across the state. These expos are a good way for businesses to introduce themselves to the industry, learn more about what the needs are, and promote the service or product they have to offer.

Recently, a business-to-business gas expo was held in Bradford, PA. More than 150 business set up displays. Exhibitors ranged from heavy equipment operators, well completion services, uniform providers, and accounting services to the larger energy and production companies. While a majority of the exhibitors were from Pennsylvania, companies from New York, Ohio, New Jersey, and Delaware were also on display. Also, many of the energy companies and oilfield service companies attended the event in search of potential vendors.

Locally, a business-to-business gas expo is being planned for May 7 at the nearby Lycoming County Fairgrounds in Hughesville. This will be the second Central Susquehanna Oil & Gas Expo. The first local Expo was held in September of 2009 with more than 125 exhibitors. Additionally, an estimated 100 other business owners attended the event to peruse the aisles in search of potential clients. Exhibitors from Pennsylvania and surrounding states, as well as firms from Colorado, Texas and Louisiana were all present.

The Central Susquehanna Oil & Gas Expo planned for this year is expected to have even more exhibitors and attendees than before. About one week into registration, more than 50 exhibitors already are confirmed for the event.

The intent of the Expo is to continue the growth of local business owners and entrepreneurs’ interaction with the natural gas industry. The goal is simple -- bring together the oil and gas industry and local businesses to explore the opportunities that abound within the gas play. We want our local businesses to benefit from this opportunity -- to grow their business and provide more family sustaining careers.

In addition to the opportunity for business-to-business networking, the Expo will also be open to the general public, and admission is free. One of the highlights at this year’s event will be the presence of the Mobile Energy Education Trailer–Unit, or MEET-U trailer, an interactive, educational exhibit on the oil and gas industry. Plans are being made to park the MEET-U trailer at schools in both Clinton and Lycoming Counties the Thursday and Friday prior to the Expo, and then the unit will be open from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Expo.

While the Expo itself is planned from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, May 7, exhibitors also have a networking event they can attend the evening before at DiSalvo’s restaurant in Williamsport. The networking event is a great opportunity to begin conversations with potential customers or forge mutually beneficial partnerships with other companies. Additionally, local, state and federal legislators will be on hand to talk with exhibitors and here their story.

So what are the benefits of participating in an Expo?

When a company is looking to explore any new industry, attendance or exhibition at a trade show is a great way to provide that company with exposure to the industry. It is important, however, to understand that a trade show is most likely not going to generate business immediately. These events are typically just a starting point where potential customers, vendors or partners learn the basics about your company. Your primary competitors will most likely be vying for the same business you are and talking with the same people.

For local businesses considering participation in the May 7 or other, similar trade shows, properly “working” a show is an important concept. Going in with the “build it and they will come” philosophy can tend to make a long day of half-hearted smiles and non-productive conversations. The event starts when you enter the facility to set up your booth, which is typically the day before. As you enter the facility, look around and see who else is setting up their display. You may see a company you want to do business with on site. Realizing they are probably like you, in a hurry to set up and move on with the next task, it would be a good time to introduce yourself and mention where your booth is and that you would like to talk with them during

the expo. Find out which vendors are in your aisle, down the hall or in another building. Expos typically have an exhibitor map that is available either at set-up or a few days before the event.

Setting up your booth at a show is not enough; you must be able to go out and network with other participants and exhibitors. As early as you can, find out what exhibitors are going to be at the event and make a list of who you feel is a potential fit for your company. If you are unfamiliar with the company, do some quick research to have a basic understanding of their needs, mission and locations. Make sure you have additional help at the booth. Try to enlist the help of those employees who bring energy, are happy and enjoy initiating conversations, and of course who are knowledgeable about your business.

Trade shows are another way to market your company. Make sure your booth is inviting, gives people a reason to stop by, is clear in your company's message and provides information people can take with them including a way to contact you. Develop a good follow-up system after the show, preferably face-to-face or by telephone. Realize also that you may need to follow up several times – companies may be planning for projects three- to six-months down the road and it could take that long to secure a contract.

There is still plenty of time and opportunity to get involved in the Central Susquehanna Oil & Gas Expo. Registration for an inside or outside booth is \$250. The registration includes an 8-by-12-foot booth, table, chairs, listing in the print and online directory and two tickets to the May 6 networking event. Outside space is also available for heavy equipment, water trucks or other machinery related to the industry. Outside space is 25-by-25-foot space and includes the same amenities as an inside booth. More information on the Expo can be found at [www.centralsusquehannaoilandgasexpo.com](http://www.centralsusquehannaoilandgasexpo.com).

The Expo is being planned and coordinated by a number of groups, including the Lock Haven University Small Business Development Center, Penn State Cooperative Extension, Pennsylvania Independent Oil & Gas Association (the industry trade group better known as PIOGA), Jersey Shore State Bank, Marcellus Shale Education & Training Center (MSETC) at Penn College, and local economic development agencies. In addition to the opportunity to exhibit, there are different levels of sponsorships available and advertising options. More information may be obtained by accessing the website or calling 570-484-2714.



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Attendees at the 2009 Central Susquehanna Oil and Gas Expo view some of the heavy equipment used in natural gas extraction. Another Expo is being planned for May 7<sup>th</sup>.



Outlaw Padding Company demonstrates their equipment to potential clients during the 2009 Central Susquehanna Oil and Gas Expo at the Lycoming County Fairgrounds.



Local exhibitors staffed indoor displays at the 2009 Oil and Gas Expo. Both indoor and outdoor exhibit space is available for this year's Expo, slated for May 7.