

## **PUCO wants to smooth transition from coal to gas power plants**

Electricity production is increasingly shifting from coal to natural gas and Ohio regulators want to figure out how to ensure a cost-effective and reliable flow of the fuel to new gas-fired power plants. The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio recently held a panel discussion with electric and gas utilities and a regional transmission organization, which oversees power flowing through the grid, to hear the industry's ideas on how the state can help effect a smooth transition to "gas-electric harmonization." PUCO Chairman Todd Snitchler, who has engaged on the issue with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, said he wants to act early to make sure Ohio doesn't experience problems supplying an increasing number of gas-fired facilities. A few "near-miss incidents" in other states where natural gas power plants faced fuel shortages that threatened large-scale power outages prompted federal regulators to start investigating the issue, which has since generated a national discussion on the topic, he said. Earlier this month the Ohio Power Siting Board approved construction of two major new gas plants. Oregon Clean Energy will build an \$860 million 800-megawatt advanced gas turbine and combined-cycle plant near a BP refinery that is expected to come online in May 2016. Rolling Hills Generating will upgrade an existing natural gas-fired facility in Wilkesville from 860 MW to 1,414 MW. FirstEnergy Corp. previously announced plans to team up with American Municipal Power to convert its coal-fired plant in Eastlake to natural gas to generate nearly 900 MW. Meanwhile, FirstEnergy, American Electric Power and other electric companies have announced plans to shut down several coal-fired units since natural gas prices have dropped in recent years and federal environmental regulations have ratcheted up. While utilities are already starting to build gas-fired "baseload" plants, natural gas is less appealing for "peaking" plants that operate intermittently during periods of peak demand. That's because pipelines typically require customers to purchase gas at a steady hourly rate and contracts for on-demand supply are much more expensive. Chairman Snitchler said in a recent interview that industry stakeholders agreed during last week's event that Ohio's natural gas infrastructure can handle the increasing demand for gas-fueled electricity in coming years. "In Ohio, we are well-positioned today and I think every speaker that talked yesterday confirmed that that was the case," he said. "Everyone here said we're ahead of the game." Nonetheless, there is some concern about pipeline capacity in Ohio, he said, noting that Columbia Gas Transmission said the company's pipelines were already full and Dominion Transmission reported operating at near capacity. Regulators and stakeholders must grapple with where to locate new gas-fired plants, who will pay for the pipelines needed to fuel them, what the charges should be and where the gas will come from, he said. "I think we're starting to try to work through some of those issues, whether it's joint ventures, or a different tariff or different models that might allow for the funding to pay for construction along those lines, we're starting to move into the next level, the granular level of problem solving," he said. Chairman Snitchler said he didn't view the need for at any kind of legislation at this point. The market is generally driving the transition from coal to gas, although gas prices are starting to inch upward lately, he said, noting that some utilities burned more coal last year than preceding years. "The dash to gas is not a bad thing, but you can't overly rely on merely one fuel," he said. "If you commit everything to gas and gas prices fluctuate up, you have no buffer, you can't switch to another fuel then you're really at the vagaries of the commodity price."

## Ohio coal mines fight, and win routinely, against big federal fines

In eastern Ohio's coal country last Aug. 13, a federal inspector went down into Powhatan Mine No. 6, one of the state's two largest mines. Both are owned by Murray Energy Corp. and controlled by Robert Murray, the Pepper Pike-based businessman and Republican donor. It was a routine inspection, yet it ended with a claim of safety violations for what the government said was a failure to spread enough rock dust, which guards against the risk of explosion when coal dust mixes with methane, a naturally occurring gas. Federal regulators fined the company nearly \$90,000, an amount that was the second largest for an Ohio coal mine in at least the last six years, according to regulatory records. But Murray Energy, which says it produces 62 percent of the coal mined in Ohio, may never have to pay that much. In an industry where safety and health citations sometimes involve a cat-and-mouse chase, mine owners — and not just Murray — are fighting significant fines as a matter of course and getting them reduced, if not dropped, a Plain Dealer examination of coal mine records has found. Large fines announced elsewhere in high-profile mine safety cases, even disasters, get reduced, too. Critics say that in fighting back, mine owners are clogging up the appeals process and wearing down a system that lacks resources to match the challenge. Like a game of Chutes and Ladders, the process plays out year after year: federal inspectors cite a mine, the agency proposes fines, the mine owner appeals and gets many of the fines reduced — and the process repeats itself anew. It raises questions about how sensible and effective the mine-safety system is. But the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration, or MSHA, defends the system, saying inspections and citations, regardless of how the fines are resolved, create safer mines. MSHA is a division of the Department of Labor. For their part, mine owners and representatives say they just are exercising their legal rights. “MSHA inspectors are given great latitude in their evaluation of alleged hazardous conditions, and many times there are mitigating circumstances that they do not take into account during their inspection,” said Gary Broadbent, Murray Energy's assistant general counsel. “We document these circumstances, and other facts, and present them later in administrative courts, which in our experience have overturned MSHA 47 percent of the time.” Reviewing MSHA data dating to 2007, the Plain Dealer examined the agency's practice of levying large fines and the Ohio mines' practice of challenging the fines. The newspaper found repeated success for mine owners. Just counting four years in which nearly every case is now resolved -- 2007 through 2010 -- the government wanted \$1.59 million from Murray Energy for citations at its two Ohio underground mines. Murray wound up paying \$1.05 million, saving more than \$531,000, according to an analysis of the federal data. It did so by seeking negotiations and, if that failed, filing appeals. Only a small portion of the original fines, \$33,966, is still pending. Murray is contesting nearly \$1.1 million more for citations issued in 2011, 2012 and early 2013, records show. This pattern has frustrated lawmakers who say mine owners are crowding the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission, an administrative court, with thousands of challenges from across the country. Although the review commission has cut its backlog in the last two years, it is far from eliminating it -- and it expects to get 11,000 new cases this year. That means the commission and its administrative law judges will probably end the year with the same number of cases they started it with, 11,682, according to their recent budget request to Congress. To mine owners, the challenges are not only legally justified. They're also financially worthwhile. “It's not uncommon for the review commission to reduce fines by about 50 percent from what the original proposed fine was,” said R. Larry Grayson, a professor of energy and mineral engineering Pennsylvania State University and a former coal miner and inspector. Take 2010, which provides

a good sample because many cases from 2012 and even 2011 are still on appeal. In 2010, the federal agency tried to fine Murray Energy \$173,987 for alleged violations at its Century Mine, according to the MSHA data. The Century Mine, which produced 8.4 million tons of coal last year, is where Mitt Romney, the 2012 Republican presidential candidate, appeared last summer to decry President Barack Obama's energy policies. Murray fought the 2010 MSHA charges and had to pay only \$102,373 in the end, a 41 percent reduction. The same pattern emerged at the Powhatan mine, where only \$185,154 out of \$311,716 in 2010 fines has been collected, with another \$32,976 still unsettled as of last week. Powhatan produced nearly 5.8 million tons of coal last year, according to MSHA. Murray Energy, the nation's largest privately owned coal company, stands out because it is the dominant player among Ohio coal mines and its owner staunchly defends his practices and views, including what he says are increasingly harsh and unnecessary environmental regulation by Democrats and the Obama White House. Murray Energy spent \$600,000 on lobbying on energy and environmental policies in Washington in 2012 and \$1.04 million in 2011, congressional records show. Murray Energy has stated publicly that it challenges all but the most minor citations. But the pattern shows up at other Ohio mines, too, though with fewer dollars at stake. "It's not just Mr. Murray who does that at his mines," said Phil Smith, spokesman for the United Mine Workers of America, a union that represents Powhatan workers. "It's all the major coal operators." At the Buckingham Mining Co.'s Buckingham Mine #6, what began as \$107,720 in proposed federal fines during 2010 ultimately became \$54,750 — cut by nearly half. The most extreme example may be at Carroll Hollow #6, a much smaller mine that started producing coal in 2009. Carroll Hollow, owned by Sterling Mining Co., was hit with proposed fines totaling \$194,590 in 2010. Yet in the end, the fines for the mine, in North Lima, were knocked down to \$57,100, a 70-percent reduction. This was chiefly because the mine owner challenged two particularly large fines of \$69,200 each, records show. One was for what the inspector said was an improper or inadequate ventilation plan, which the mine owner disputed and quickly got reduced to \$10,000, records show. The other was from a charge that the mine had unmarked hazardous conditions, which the owner also contested -- and MSHA soon threw out the citation. "Some facts are in question in every case," said W. Thomas Mackall, president of Sterling Mining. "We have the responsibility to say that 'this, this and this' were mitigating factors." He said he believes a better spirit of cooperation all around would better foster a culture of safety, but added, "I don't believe that some of the fines should have been what they were." Kevin Stricklin, MSHA's administrator for coal mine safety, disputes the mine owners' contention that his agency tends to over-charge, saying citations are based on a point system that minimizes subjectivity. The proposed fines are determined separately by an office of assessments after a charge has been reviewed by a field office supervisor and district manager. Then come the challenges. Coal company lawyers plead their cases first to a litigation conference administrator for MSHA, with a regional office in St. Clairsville, Ohio. If unsuccessful, they file a challenge with the administrative court. It is fully within their legal rights. But this raises a question about the regulations, the inspection regimen and the routine pattern of challenges: If so many challenges succeed, does the coal mine safety system work? "I guess one could argue that the system works to a degree," because the death rate "has plummeted in the United States" since serious mine safety legislation was first passed in 1969 and was upgraded in 1977, said Tony Oppgard, a Kentucky attorney who represents miners and their families. "There may be some merit" to the argument that mine operators game the system, "but on the other hand, Congress gave companies the right to contest every citation." Stricklin, MSHA's coal safety administrator, said, "We think it does work. The big thing is, we

get the citation issued and the condition corrected. And that's the most important thing to our inspectors — to make sure that we're protecting miners' lives." His agency said that in 2012, 19 coal miners died on the job, the second lowest number ever. And the rate of reported injuries was the lowest ever. In the last six years, Ohio has had one death in an underground coal mine, in 2011 when a 41-year-old mechanic at the Century mine was struck in the chest by a part from a defective jack, used to support the mine roof. MSHA cited Murray's American Energy Corp. subsidiary in connection with the equipment failure, and wanted to fine the company at least \$1,412, records show. "This matter is still pending and, out of respect for the family, we will not make any public comment at this time," Broadbent, Murray's assistant general counsel, said. Murray Energy and industry officials say that responsible owners, including Murray, maintain their own proactive safety programs. "We pride ourselves in operating some of the safest mines in the country, and providing nearly 3,500 high paying, well benefited jobs," Broadbent said. And some outside experts say both sides are duty-bound to play the game — the mine safety agency because its inspectors have no discretion but to write a violation if they see one, and the mine owners because their violations, like points on a driver's record, are costly and have severe consequences. "I don't care how good you are, you are going to get citations," said Christopher Bise, chairman of West Virginia University's mining engineering program. Countered the miners union's Smith, "MSHA doesn't issue assessments or violations just for no reason." Murray first became known nationally when portions of the Crandall Canyon Mine in Utah, operated by Murray subsidiary Genwal Resources, collapsed in two successive cave-ins in 2007, killing six miners, two rescuers and a federal inspector trying to help in the rescue. Robert Murray, on the site and in the national news daily, maintained initially that an earthquake was to blame, but a federal investigation cited a "grossly insufficient" mine design. The investigation resulted in a settlement of \$1.15 million with Genwal and another Murray subsidiary, Andalex Resources, negotiated down from a proposed \$1.6 million fine. A related plea deal in the criminal case against Genwal brought misdemeanor convictions and fines of \$500,000, prompting U.S. District Judge David Sam to comment on his "outrage at the minuscule amount provided by the criminal statute." But the federal mine safety agency came in for criticism, too, by the Department of Labor for inadequate oversight of the mine's engineering and its evaluation of the mine's roof-control plan. The Crandall Canyon disaster occurred while the mine safety agency was still implementing tougher penalties in the wake of a West Virginia mine explosion, unrelated to Murray, that killed 12. But those stiff penalties in the new Mine Improvement and New Emergency Response Act of 2006 — regarded as the first substantial reforms in 28 years — appear to have directly affected how Murray and other companies now deal with their citations. Suddenly, penalties of up to \$70,000, or up to \$242,000 for flagrant violations, were at stake, and there were fewer opportunities to work things out in informal settings. "Indeed, the cost of not contesting a citation which we find to be questionable has increased enormously," three Murray safety officials wrote in a letter to a mining oversight committee in the House of Representatives in 2009. They were responding to a suggestion by legislators that Murray was clogging the regulatory docket. They countered that Murray was exercising its due process rights under the Constitution and mine safety laws. And they noted that Murray Energy in 2007 hired a new assistant safety director — who previously was a supervisory inspector for the federal mine safety agency — and he directed the company to "err on the side of caution by contesting everything except de minimis (the most minor) penalties." The mine safety agency would not comment on Murray's legal strategy or practices. But asked if a determined, potentially litigious mine owner stands a good chance of paying less, Stricklin, the government's head of mine safety

said, “I can’t say they won’t pay as much. But they’ll be able to drag (the case) out in the court system a lot longer.” Bruce Watzman, senior vice president of the National Mining Association, said that “there are two sides to the discussion” when coal companies negotiate or appeal a fine, so it is not as if coal executives are bargaining in unchallenged. “It’s not dictated by the company,” Watzman said. “The government is a party in this as well.” The cost of not litigating can become steep if a mine’s safety record is in question. To gauge safety, regulators factor not only the number of citations issued and upheld but also the amount of time a mine was inspected. This provides a fair comparison, authorities say, of violations at small mines and those at large operations that see federal inspectors frequently. Even though the law calls for at least four underground inspections a year, large mines like Powhatan get an almost never-ending cycle just to cover all the ground, MSHA says. Measured this way, the Powhatan mine had slightly fewer than the national average number of violations per inspection day for the last 15 months, according to MSHA data. The Century mine did even better. But mine safety authorities consider other factors when assessing safety, such as repeat violations, violations that could lead to significant and substantial (“S&S”) injuries, and tips or complaints that inspectors might hear. They use these to surprise mine workers and supervisors with unannounced “impact inspections,” better known as blitzes. Murray’s Powhatan mine had a blitz from an MSHA team in February. A number of violations were cited, but that’s not atypical for a mine. The share deemed to have a significant and substantial risk of serious injury came to 20.8 percent — half the average of the other mines blitzed that month. “Again, we operate some of the safest mines in the country,” Broadbent said in an email. “Indeed, the S&S rate you referenced (20.8%) is well below the national average (30%).” It was also lower than the Powhatan mine’s general average in recent years, records show. But Powhatan’s S&S level has been trending lower so far in 2013. That’s exactly how Murray or any mine owner wants it, and not only for safety reasons. The government can order mines with recurring high S&S rates to shut down until they fix their problems. It takes unusually high S&S scores, along with actual injury rates and related factors, for a mine to be labeled such a chronic violator, and only two mines in the country, neither owned by Murray, have hit that level, both in 2011. But the potential for more is growing — and that explains one more legal challenge. Under old mine safety rules, authorities could not count S&S citations toward the chronic-violator threshold unless they were final or, if challenged, upheld through appeals. If they were still pending, regulators could not use them to justify a shutdown order. This gave a mine owner the presumption of innocence until he had his day in court. That presumption went away on March 25. A new federal rule, approved by the Department of Labor, kicked in that day, authorizing the mine agency to partially base its punitive calculation on all significant and substantial citations in the most recent 12-months — even those being contested. “MSHA should not be prevented from taking action to protect the lives of miners for months, or even years, while we await the outcome of citations and orders that a mine operator can easily contest,” Joseph Main, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety, said in announcing the rule. Murray Energy, like many in the industry, has a problem with this rule. MSHA data show that if the agency counted even contested S&S citations in the most recent 12 months, the Powhatan mine’s S&S rate would exceed the national average, though it still would fall below the federal imminent-danger level. The rates at several smaller Ohio mines would go up as well. The new rule “fails to protect the safety of coal miners,” Broadbent said, and it “absolutely deprives coal operators of their right to due process.” MSHA and its parent agency, the Department of Labor, disagree, saying mine owners could go to court to seek an emergency order if they think an impending closure is unjustified. But Murray, the Ohio Coal

Association, National Mining Association and others have petitioned in the Sixth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to have the rule vacated. They say that by counting safety violations that might later be voided, the government is violating their constitutional rights. The court has not yet set a date for considering the matter.

*Cleveland Plain Dealer. 5/5/13.*

## **Adrian residents air concerns about oil wells in popular park: City officials say they're confident no public threat looms**

Tom Wassmer is familiar with the route that new pipelines will travel to carry oil from Adrian's Heritage Park and through Beaver Creek, to a central processing facility on the M-52 highway. Dressed in shorts and sandals fit for hiking, Mr. Wassmer had a digital camera in his pocket and a tan hat to shield him from the sun on a recent warm afternoon at Heritage Park. The Adrian resident and assistant professor of biology at Siena Heights University frequents the recreational land space for exercise, but he's followed the oil and gas project nearly since its beginning. Between maintaining a blog and using his cell phone to create a map that outlines the mile-long pipeline route, not a day goes by that some aspect of Mr. Wassmer's life doesn't connect to the project. He's gone door-to-door in his community, asking neighbors to engage in conversation. He's helped facilitate a workshop with the Adrian Dominican Sisters in March, which was aimed to explore responses to oil drilling in the area. But his environmental stewardship efforts don't end there. All of the work, all of the time, is for a purpose, he said. "Heritage Park is kind of my safe haven, like a sanctuary," he said. But he believes his tranquil escape from reality is about to change, with the introduction of Savoy Energy LP pipelines. Mr. Wassmer and several others from the community, including Dr. Victoria Powell, a Madison Township pediatrician, have been studying the impact of oil and gas production in the Adrian area for many months. In 2010 and 2011, Adrian city commissioners signed contracts with Savoy, based in Traverse City, Mich., for oil leases of more than 1,100 acres of city-owned land. Just east of M-52 on North Adrian Drive, Heritage Park, Adrian's largest community park, is tucked behind a mobile-home court. The park is known for its disc golf course. Pipelines from nearby oil wells are to travel through the park to a property known as Witt Farm, where a central processing facility has been built to separate oil, gas, and brine. Mr. Wassmer said the processing plant's exhaust could make nearby residents sick. Many of the chemicals involved in the production of oil and gas are regulated by the Federal Clean Air Act. Some of the pollutants, including benzene, toluene, and ethylbenzene, can cause health problems. Benzene, linked to possible reproductive and developmental effects, can cause confusion, rapid heart rate, headaches, and tremors. Adrian City Administrator Dane Nelson said last month the city acknowledges residents' concerns, including health issues. "I appreciate that they are concerned, as we are concerned with any factory in town or any gas station in town. We always have concern," Mr. Nelson said, adding that the police and fire departments have reviewed the project to identify potential issues. Several dozen oil wells have been drilled in Lenawee County in recent years, starting northwest of

Adrian and spreading toward — and later southeast of — the city. Lou Schineman, district supervisor for the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality's office of oil, gas, and minerals, said the agency takes an active role to address complaints, including noise, odor, and spills, from residents and operators. "I do not know of any report of complaints at any of the facilities in Lenawee County," Mr. Schineman said. Mr. Schineman said he has spoken with geologists who cover Lenawee County, and they say they are unaware of any complaints from residents. According to documentation from the department of environmental quality, records show four central processing facilities are in Lenawee County and two tank battery sites. But oil production has not been without problems. In 2011, an illegal oil dump in Adrian Township resulted in \$43,000 in cleanup costs. Six months ago, a Savoy drilling rig in Heritage Park injured a worker when it collapsed during dismantling. Oil-production plans within city limits have prompted two letters to the city administration and city commission, dated Feb. 22 and April 1, from the Adrian Dominican Sisters. As the founder and sponsor of Siena Heights University, the Adrian Dominican Sisters order is one of the city's largest employers. The letters question many aspects of the project, including whether the city's leases with Savoy comply with the city code, said Sister Elise Garcia, director of communications and technology for the Dominican sisters. Also outlined in the documents are questions about the Witt Farm property's site, which is in a high groundwater recharge area that helps with wells. Adrian Mayor Greg DuMars said the city responded to the sisters just two weeks ago. He said the city and the sisters had a meeting time arranged last month, but it was canceled because one of the sisters had to go out of town. "They know that we're more than willing to come over and talk with them," he said. The mayor said he has no reason to believe that the facilities will pose any threat to the public, and he dismissed the possibility that oil could leak into the area's groundwater. A worker was injured about six months ago when a rig like this one collapsed as it was being dismantled in the park. "The oil is approximately 4,000 feet down, and I don't know of any water wells that are deeper than 200 feet," Mr. DuMars said. He said he is open to discussing what is going on with any resident who calls his office. Mr. DuMars cited Traverse City as another Michigan city that has oil and gas wells on city park property. "They've been taking oil from wells in their parks for over 20 years and have not had one problem," he said. How much Adrian might receive in royalty payments depends on how much — and how long — wells on city land produce oil or gas, the mayor said. "We haven't gotten any checks. It's conceivable that we could see \$1 million a year from these royalties," he said. Any royalties the city receives will be placed in a separate account, Mr. DuMars said. Potential uses for such money include building a swimming pool or aquatics facility, Mr. DuMars said, or something else that would help the community directly. "We don't have any plans to spend the money," the mayor said. "We're working on putting together a trust agreement to determine how we might spend royalties that we get."

Toledo Blade. 5/13/2013.

## **Utica shale analyzed in Ohio**

Ohio's Utica shale is generating big production numbers, although it's been a slow process and some experts were hoping for even bigger numbers. The state on Thursday released production data from 87 Utica wells drilled by 11 companies — with the wells producing 12.8 billion cubic feet of natural gas and so-called natural gas liquids and 635,896 barrels of oil in 2012. That means the average well produced a modest 1.6 million cubic feet of natural gas per day plus 80 barrels of oil. Ohio's oil production grew by 93 percent and 80 percent for natural gas from a year earlier. The long-awaited report offers a first glimpse of the true potential of the Utica shale under eastern Ohio. The data appear to show that the Utica shale will be dominated by natural gas more than oil. The oil volumes were lower than had been projected, and that's likely a disappointment to analysts and energy companies. "It's shaping up largely as a natural-gas play," said Tom Stewart, executive vice president of the Ohio Oil and Gas Association. "I'm not disappointed or discouraged by the numbers. ... But this is a process that takes time to develop." It is possible that large quantities of oil may still be found in sections of the Utica shale in Ohio, he said. The Utica shale is "the real deal," said James Zehringer, director of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources at a Columbus news conference. The natural gas volume may be disappointing to some but the lack of pipelines and processing plants in Ohio has slowed the development of its Utica shale, officials said in unveiling the data. Ohio's total compares to 2 trillion cubic feet of natural gas in Pennsylvania's Marcellus shale and 455 billion cubic feet in West Virginia in 2012. The Marcellus shale, however, lacks the Utica shale's mix of natural gas and lucrative liquids: oil and natural gas liquids (ethane, butane and propane). Of the 87 Ohio wells, only two were in production for more than 300 days in 2012 and 74 were in production for less than half a year, hurting Ohio's production totals, officials said. The 87 wells were in production for a total of 7,979 days in 2012, according to the report. Utica shale wells represent two tenths of 1 percent of Ohio wells yet those 87 wells produced 12 percent of Ohio's oil and 16 percent of Ohio's natural gas in 2012. One horizontal well in the Utica shale produces as much oil as 312 vertical-only wells and as much natural gas as 448 vertical-only wells, Zehringer said. Ohio's Utica shale has "a very bright future," he said. "The production from these initial Utica wells makes a compelling statement about the staggering amount of oil and gas resources Ohio's shale appears to contain." "Utica shale is off to a strong start ... but its best is yet to come," said David Mustine, managing director of JobsOhio, the economic development agency created by Ohio Gov. John Kasich. Ohio is projecting that Utica wells will produce 73 percent of Ohio's oil and 82 percent of its natural gas by 2015. State officials estimate that Ohio will have 1,012 drilled Utica wells producing oil and natural gas and natural gas liquids by 2015, said Rick Simmers, chief of the Division of Oil and Gas Resources Management. The state projects there will be 362 Utica shale wells in production by the end of this year. By the end of 2014, the state estimated there will be 662 Utica wells in production. "This is significant growth," Simmers said. It is expected that Ohio's Utica production will exceed the yearly production of the state's 51,000 existing vertical-only wells by early 2015, he said. The projected volume of natural gas in 2015 is 146 billion cubic feet in addition to 7.2 million barrels of oil and natural gas liquids, his agency said. The list was dominated by Chesapeake Energy Corp.'s 53 wells. Chesapeake expects to quadruple its Ohio production by the end of 2013 with the completion of pipelines and processing plants that will allow more wells to be hooked up plus new wells drilled in 2013. The report also lists 688,458 barrels of brine that were produced by the 87 wells. The report offers the second official production data from Ohio's Utica shale wells, figures that have been sought for months by financial analysts. Most production data have been tightly guarded secrets by the energy companies, although some firms provided limited information on Ohio wells. Ohio

requires drillers to report results only once a year. The deadline was March 31. Ohio has approved Utica shale permits for 660 wells. Of that total, 326 wells have been drilled and 97 are now in production, as of May 11, according to the state. Carroll County has the highest number of wells in the state. A total of 31 drilling rigs are working in Ohio. Last year's Ohio production report offered little insight into the emerging Utica shale. That's because the report covered only nine horizontal wells. There were six wells in Carroll County and one each in Portage, Harrison and Mahoning counties. Five of those wells were in production in 2011 and generated nearly 2.6 billion cubic feet of natural gas, plus 43,513 barrels of oil. The other four wells produced no natural gas in 2011, but oil was recovered during completion. The four wells each produced less than 1,000 barrels of oil in 2011. The report is available at <http://oilandgas.ohiodnr.gov/production>.

*Akron Beacon-Journal. 5/17/13*

## **Ohio officials target rivers to stem algae blooms**

Ohio environmental officials are focusing on six major streams as they try to cut pollutants that help toxic algae thrive in the state's lakes and other waterways. The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency has for years worked to cut manure and fertilizer runoff from Ohio farms and discharge from sewage treatment plants that contribute to poisonous blooms of blue-green algae in Lake Erie and Grand Lake St. Marys in western Ohio. The state EPA will focus on the Scioto, Great Miami, Maumee, Sandusky, Cuyahoga and Wabash rivers in an effort to curtail runoff that pollutes not only Ohio lakes but the Gulf of Mexico, too, the Columbus Dispatch reported today. Toxic algae grow thick in water polluted with phosphorus and nitrogen from sewage, manure and fertilizers. They produce liver and nerve toxins that can sicken people and have killed pets and wildlife. Dead and decomposing algae rob water of oxygen, creating "dead zones" where nothing can live. The blooms kill fish populations, stink up beaches and put a dent in the lakes' lucrative sport-fishing and tourism industries. Ohio EPA officials have so far followed the federal framework, which encourages working to improve specific streams. Brian Hall, assistant chief of surface water for the Ohio EPA, said the agency will measure pollution in each stream and take steps to reduce it. The Scioto River in central Ohio and the Wabash River in Great Miami in southwestern Ohio are associated with runoff that contributes to a vast "dead zone" in the Gulf of Mexico every summer. A 2007 U.S. Geological Survey analysis put Ohio among nine states that supply 75 percent of the nitrogen and phosphorus to the Gulf via the Mississippi River. Toxic algae advisories went up last week at Grand Lake St. Marys, Ohio's largest inland lake, warning visitors to stay out of the water. The ODNR said recent test results showed toxin levels higher than the recommended threshold. State officials said recently they are concerned that the wet Ohio spring will again bring toxic algae problems back to Lake Erie. Heavy rain this year in northwestern Ohio has nearly doubled the average amount of phosphorus that washes off farm fields each spring and flows down the Maumee River to the lake.

*Associated Press. 5/28/13*

## **'Part of the community': Latinos rebuild after Oklahoma tornado**

Mynor Sanchez, a resident of Moore, Okla., lives a few blocks away and three houses down from major destruction. He is volunteering Friday in the neighborhood with his church, Templo El Alabanza, trying to do any tasks with which residents need help. Mynor Sanchez, a resident of Moore, Okla., lives a few blocks away and three houses down from major destruction. He is volunteering Friday in the neighborhood with his church, Templo El Alabanza, trying to do any tasks with which residents need help. Pastor Chano Najera calls out T-shirt sizes in Spanglish to volunteers waiting for their uniforms. It's easy to spot Najera in this crowd - just look for the cowboy hat. He preaches in Spanish at Templo De Alabanza in Oklahoma City. On this morning, though, he's wrangling a group of young Latino volunteers as they wheel cases of water bottles onto trucks headed for Moore, Okla., where an EF-5 tornado ripped through neighborhoods last week, but spared Najera's home. Najera was born in Mexico and has lived in Oklahoma for more than three decades - long enough to know which tornado tips are especially worth preaching: "Go buy a safe box!" he says. "Keep the most important papers and documents and whatever they have in the safe box." Then, he says, find a space under the floor board of your home and "bury it." Protecting birth certificates, passports and other personal documents is especially important for immigrants. Najera also tries to encourage community involvement among Latinos who may feel they don't belong. "What we try to tell them is: 'No, no, no. You need to be part of it. Don't exclude yourself from the process. We are part of the community,' " he says. Once the dozens of volunteers from Najera's disaster relief team arrived in Moore, one group set to work raking storm debris from a front yard. Eli Sanchez and his family of four live in this neighborhood. The foundation for their brick home moved during the storm and left cracked walls inside. The tornado was even less forgiving to his parents, whose home in Moore was leveled. Sanchez says the one thing his father - an immigrant from Guatemala - hoped to recover was his American citizenship certificate. "He was proud of that, because he framed it and he put it on the bookshelf for everybody to see," Sanchez says. Sanchez's wife, Maria, says she understood her father-in-law's wish, because she just became a U.S. citizen herself. "I came here illegally, but I was 2. I was 2 years old," she says. Maria Sanchez was born in Mexico, and she says she hasn't forgotten the barriers facing undocumented immigrants. "The first thing is the mentality - the mentality of fear," she says. "You know, I'm scared to go ask for help." It's an all-too-familiar kind of anxiety for people like Amelia, an undocumented immigrant from central Mexico. NPR isn't using her last name. "It's stressful," Amelia says in Spanish. Amelia cleans offices to support her and her 8-year-old daughter. They lived in a trailer home in Moore that was in the path of last week's tornado. When the storm came through town, Amelia rushed to pick her daughter up from Plaza Towers Elementary School. They then took cover under a bridge. Amelia says it's a miracle they survived, but they still lost nearly everything. "I was desperate," Amelia says, "But also afraid to ask for help." But she knew she had no choice but to take the risk. It took her three days to build up her courage. Then she got in her car, talked to church volunteers and went to a public health clinic for counseling. She even approached an official and asked how the government could help rebuild her life. She says she can't imagine having done any of this before the tornado. But now Amelia says: "I no longer feel alone. And I no longer feel afraid of anyone."

*Code Switch. 5/26/13*