

Observer-Reporter, Tuesday, October 28, 2008

## Open House presents new Foundation Coal Plans

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ROGERSVILLE - About 20 members of United Mine Workers Association joined property owners at an informational open house Oct. 21, where plans for the new Foundation Mine to be built near Holbrook were presented.

Members of UMWA, representing Cumberland Mine Local 2300 and Emerald Mine Local 2258, wanted to know if company officials plan to employ union miners at the new mine. They were told no.

Foundation Coal Co. is seeking permits for underground mining from the state Department of Environmental Protection. The company plans to begin construction of surface facilities near Holbrook in early 2010. It could take another year before the permits are approved.

Foundation operates the Cumberland and Emerald mines that employ about 1,000 people. Workers at those mines are members of UMWA.

Walt Smodic, director of the mining committee for Cumberland Local 2310, said the union wanted to make a presence as the process begins to develop the new mine. Foundation also is planning a second mine in northeastern Greene County. It will be located near Clarksville and be known as Freeport Mine.

Samantha Davison, Foundation's communications specialist, said plans are to have the new mine open non-represented, but employees can make the decision later whether to unionize.

Residents who attended the open house at Center Township fire hall had questions how the mining would affect their property or water supply.

Rod Lawrence, director of technical services, said several union men also asked him if there were any plans to tie the new mine into Cumberland Mine. Currently, there are no plans to do so, said Lawrence, although mining is expected to continue in the coming years south of the proposed mining block of nearly 9,500 acres outlined in red on the maps at the open house.

The company foresees development mining, using room-and-pillar method, beginning in 2012-13 with longwall mining starting in 2015 and 2016.

"We have reserves in this area for plus 30 years of mining," Lawrence said.

Once permits are approved, Foundation plans to begin construction on surface facilities that will include a slope and air shaft. Also constructed would be a silo, warehouse and bath house on about 175 acres.

Once the mine goes into longwall production, it is expected to employ 500 people.

Terry Dayton, environmental manager for Foundation, said much has changed since Emerald Mine was constructed in 1976. He expects there will be less of an impact with noise, light and dust than there was 30 years ago.

"It's going to provide a lot of jobs and provide the country with a lot of energy, too," he said.

The mining will take place in Center and Jackson townships. The state has designated this portion of the county as an Environmental Justice Area, meaning 20 percent of the people living there are at or below poverty levels and requiring DEP to increase community outreach and awareness during its permit review. The Environmental Justice movement began in 1982, aimed at improving the lives of those affected by environmental racism. An independent study conducted by the United Church of Christ revealed this was a national pattern. It showed one of the best predictors of where a hazardous waste facility would be located was the race of nearby residents.