

LEMMON



LEADER

Friday, March 23, 2012

Volume 105, Issue No. 12

75¢

• How far will the impact go?

Are South Dakotans treading on edge of 'oil boom'?



**DONNY NELSON AND
MARK TRECHOCK**

By TAMARA WIRTZ
Leader Editor

Talk of the 'Oil Boom' raised more than an eye-brow or two, recently in Lemmon.

Public officials and concerned citizens met with "Ranchers" from the North Dakota area during a Bakken Oil meeting, March 15, in Lemmon.

The meeting was geared toward development of social strategies and impact issues involving the po-

tential progression of the oil development.

Speaker Holly Wadell, from Western Organizations Resource Council said, "Save the Family Farm and our Natural Resources." Wadell is involved with 'Grassroots' as well as Dakota Rural Action with seven states affiliated in the movement. Five of those states include North and South Dakota, Montana, Idaho, and Oregon.

Rancher Donny Nelson, 48, from Watford City said, "Your lives

are gonna' change if it comes. Crime is rampant? Some of your neighbors are gonna' die if it comes here. I have seen at least three or four 'booms. This is a different 'boom'. This one is ten times the 'boom'. If you've got oil here, it's coming. If everyone in this room gets together, you can take control."

Watford City was once known as "The Greatest Place To Live," with a population of 1,500 residents. It now has 7,500 residents and went from having three law enforcement

officers to nine officers due to the large volume of workers who have moved to the area to obtain employment in the oil industry.

Nelson and city residents witnessed first hand the rapid increase in violent crime, theft, prostitution, housing shortages, an increase in mortgages, overcrowded highways, man camps and chaos in city streets since the 'boom' hit. The impact has been devastating. In

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Nominees, Honoree award presented at chamber banquet

By TAMARA WIRTZ
Leader Editor

Three new members were nominated for positions on the Cham-

bers Board during the annual banquet Friday night. Kristine Bannick, Laura Frank and Jenny

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Hollywood, here we come!



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Oil impact

From Front Page

speculation, if it reaches Lemmon, will the city be prepared?

Conflict between the Federal government, the State and landowners is on the rise. Landowners with surface minerals are battling to prevent the State and Federal governments from taking control of their mineral rights. Said Dakota Resource Council member, Mark Trechock, "If you have oil and gas under your surface, you can't stop them from drilling. I am telling you this, there is a lot of dishonesty in this industry."

Because oil and gas are several thousand feet underground, the Federal Government considers it open territory. It was stated that the Federal Government once took minerals from an Indian reservation and then decided they didn't need them.

Drilling has not occurred on any landowners' property in the Lemmon area, according to a poll taken during Thursday's meeting. Said Trechock, "As you know, minerals

on your land are not necessarily your minerals. You know that right?"

As a landowner, you have the right to lease or not to lease. "If you do have minerals figure out how much they are worth. In North Dakota if a landowner chooses not to lease, the state will authorize it and the landowner is left with no control over the decision to lease or not to lease," according to Trechock.

"Do not trust these people whatever you do. It's your first mistake. If this is coming, you need to be organizing."

Proposed waste facilities have become another concern. Water is contaminated from fracking. Waste from oil sites have been put into reserve pits or ('open pits' in the ground) and companies are permitted to drill within 500 feet of residential homes. Last year, 50 reserves overflowed in Dickinson due to rainfall. Trechock stated that North Dakota is trying to move and treat as much soil as possible and the State Health Department needs to approve waste material.

Two of the worst disasters in North Dakota were failure to produce salt-water pipelines. A pipe burst.

"It was saltier than the Dead Sea! Even worms died," said Trechock.

Last summer another spill affected 28 acres of farmland in North Dakota as well.

Trechock advised the community to be careful with housing stating that folks who are in the greatest danger are renters as, rent could increase rapidly. As an example, long-term residents are leaving North Dakota communities due to the increase in rent and mortgages.

"Oil business will bring a lot of good things and a lot of good people too," Nelson said.



HOLLY WADELL