Gas Leaks Cause Two Home Evacuations

1/12/81 Front Page

By Tim Farrell
Daily Times Staff

Two homes on Camino Rio Drive in Farmington have been evacuated in the last couple of weeks because the Gas Company of New Mexico found dangerous levels of gas leaking under the structures.

Frank Chavez, a district supervisor with the New Mexico Energy and Minerals Department, said the homes are owned by Harold Roberts and Winnie Brady. Other homes in the vicinity are now being checked for the same problem.

There is some uncertainty as to what exactly is causing the gas leaks. Saturday state officials were digging in the back yard of Dale Nettleton's home where it is thought an old gas well is located. But it is also still a possibility that pipes from the Gas Company of New Mexico are leaking. "We're just not sure at this point," Chavez said.

"We found a lot of evidence that there is an old well beneath the (Nettleton) yard, so we think there is a good possibility that that is where the gas is leaking from," said Charles C. Gholson, field representative for the Energy and Minerals Department. Nettleton's home is down the street a short distance from the affected homes.

Gholson theorizes that the gas from the old well may have leaked out and moved horizontally through the ground to the Brady and Roberts homes. "If you have clay or ground like that, gas can travel that way," he said. "But that's a long way for it to go. But it's possible."

The old gas well was drilled in 1958 by a man named Floyd West. The operator of the well was A.H. Bernstein. "These homes I believe were built about 1958, two years after the well was abandoned in 1956," according to evacuee Roberts.

And why were homes built on the top of an old gas well? Simple, the two men from the state agency say. The house builders probably didn't know it was even there. "According to records, this well was supposed to be drilled near the bluffs, not here," Chavez said. "For some reason, it seems, the well was drilled in the wrong place. I really don't know how it happened."

The gas leak is no small matter, according to Gholson. "A pilot light could have set it off because there was a dangerous level of gas escaping. Whether it would have damaged other homes in the area, I don't know. It would just depend on how big a leak it was. We just don't know about that."

So the search for the origin of the leak continues. And the two families evacuated might just have to spend Christmas away from home. "It's just one of those things though," Roberts said. "These things will happen; when they say it's dangerous I believe them, and would much rather be living in a motel room till they get it fixed."

Gas Leaks Cause Two Home Evacuations

11/8/81 Front Page

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Oil Conservation Commission

A.H. Bernstein

Bloomfield Oilfield Service Co.
Rig # 3
Operator Kenneth Marsh

Notes from A.H. Bernstein:

12-14-81: Moved in rig and rigged up in the Dale Nettleton back yard. Set 9 ft., 24" conductor pipe, set up equipment and get ready to drill.

12-15-81: Drilled on 12¼ surface hole, drilled down to 15 ft. in boulders, trip out of the hole, put on 6¼ bit, tripped in the hole and reamed hole to 30 ft.

12-16-81: Drilled on surface hole, drilling on boulders, unable to make hole, trip out of the hole, put on 8 3/4 bit, trip in the hole and reamed the rest of day.

12-17-81: Drilled on surface hole, mix gel for drill mud, unable to make any hole because of boulders.

12-18-81: Tried to ream hole, hole caving, drilled down to 22 ft, ran 22 ft. of 7 " pipe and cemented with 40 sacks class A cement, didn't circulate.

12-19-81: Mixed and pumped 40 sacks down backside of 7" with 1 " tubing. Cement circulated to surface.

12-20-81: Nipple up B.O.P. and drilled cement. Broke circulation to surface again. Tripped out of the hole.

12-21-81: Squeezed 25 sacks of class A cement down 7 " casing. Shut well in overnight. Cement did circulate to surface.

12-22-81: Tripped in the hole and drilled 15 ft. of cement, broke circulation to surface. Tripped out of the hole, nipple down, tried to pull 7 " casing, unable to. Rigged down unit and moved off location.

12-23-81: Moved in McDonald's cable tool rig and drilled down beside 7 " casing, made 5 ft. of hole.

12-24-81: Drilled down beside 7 " casing, drilled down to 23 ft.

12-25-81: Drilled inside 7 " casing, made about 5 ft. to 27 ft.

12-26-81: Drilled on iron, made about 1½ ft.

12-28-81: Drilled past iron, made about 8 ft., down to 37 ft.

12-29-81: Drilled from 37 ft. to 55 ft.

12-30-81: Drilled from 55 ft. to 73 ft.

12-31-81: Drilled from 73 ft. to 97 ft.

1-1-82: Drilled from 97 ft. to 120 ft.

1-2-82: Drilled from 120 ft. to 153 ft.

1-3-82: Drilled from 153 ft. to 165 ft.

1-4-82: Drilled from 165 ft. to 169 ft., ran 79 ft of 5½ casing and cement with 50 sacks class A cement, cement circulated to surface. Rigged down cable tool and moved off location.

1-5-82: Rigged up rig, nippled up B.O.P., moved in equipment and prepar to drill.

1-6-82: Picked up 4 3/4 collars, drilled cement and trip to bottom, drilled from 165 ft. to 185 ft.

1-7-82: Thaw out pump and B.O.P., drill from 185 ft. to 215 ft. Trip out of the hole, changed out bit.

1-8-82: Trip in the hole with new bit and drilled from 215 ft. to 275 f Pulled 2 joints out of hole.

1-9-82: Trip in the hole with 2 joints and drilled from 275 ft. to 373 ft., circulate hole clean and trip out of the hole.

1-10-82: Ran Totco survey - 1st run, 85 ft. and 1 3/4 degree off; 2nd run, 185 ft.= 1½ degree out, 3rd run, 330 ft. = 1¼ degree out. Rigged up to drill. Circulate hole clean. Tripped out of the hole with drilling assembly and tripped in the hole open ended. Rigged up to cement.

1-11-82: Cement hole with 40 sacks class A cement. Trip out of the hol and squeezed 5 bbls. fresh water down 5½ casing. Stripped off B.O.P. an shut well in with 5½ X 2 swedge and 2 in. valve.

1-12-82: Tripped in the hole tagged cement @ 110 ft., trip out of the h pumped 2 bbls. fresh water down 5½ casing, mixed and pumped 50 sacks of class A cement down 5½ casing, shut well in overnight.

1-13-82: Tripped in the hole, tagged cement @ 70 ft., tripped out of th hole, mixed and pumped 10 sacks cement down 5½ casing. Rigged down and road rig to yard. Dug down beside 20" conductor and cut off 20", 7", and 5½" casing 8 ft. below ground level. Plugged stub with 10 sacks class A cement and filled hole.

1-14-82: Moved equipment off location and cleaned location of trash.

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