

# Coalfield Review

CENTER FOR COALFIELD JUSTICE

## Welcome to the Center

Tri-State Citizens Mining Network unveiled its new name: **Center for Coalfield Justice**. Dedicated to working for community justice in western Pennsylvania's coalfields, we have been organizing around coal mining impacts on communities and the environment since 1994

"The Center for Coalfield Justice is a new name that reflects the need to take a more comprehensive look at impacts of coal mining in our communities," explained Jim Kleissler, the new Executive Director for the organization.

As part of the organization's facelift, the Center for Coalfield Justice launched a new website at [www.coalfieldjustice.org](http://www.coalfieldjustice.org). The new website, among other things, features a blog, a mediawiki page, and a sign-up for the organization's *Coalfield Review* e-mail newsletter.

"Industrial mechanized coal mining practices have a pervasive effect on our communities, homesteads, farmland, and our natural environment," explained Mimi Filippelli. "In

order to better reflect the work that our community organization is doing, we changed our name to Center for Coalfield Justice."

In addition to changing its name, the organization welcomes two new staff members. Jim Kleissler is the new Executive Director, and Rebekah Weigel is the new Community Organizer. The organization has a long history of doing public education work and providing assistance to homeowners impacted by coal mining operations. The organization is known for its lobbying efforts, protests, and community forums.

"I joined the Center for Coalfield Justice because I believe that our communities have a right to a reasonable quality of life without having our businesses and home lives disrupted by coal mining operations," said Rebekah Weigel, the Center's Community Organizer.

## Open House May 22nd

The Center for Coalfield Justice is having a grand opening on May 22nd, from 5-9pm at our new office located at 96 E. Chestnut St., Washington, PA near the intersection of E. Chestnut and College streets.

The event will be an opportunity to meet the staff and board members while learning more about the organization.

If you are unable to attend the opening, but would like to support the center, on-line donations can be made at [www.coalfieldjustice.org](http://www.coalfieldjustice.org) or by mail at PO Box 1080, Washington, PA 15301.

Regular office hours are M-F from 10am-4pm. Stop in for a visit or contact us at 724-229-3550 or [info@coalfieldjustie.org](mailto:info@coalfieldjustie.org).

*May 2007*

Volume 5 Issue 2

We are always looking for article submissions from our members. Don't miss this opportunity to draw attention to your local issues!

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# DRYerson Festival at Ryerson Station State Park

Ryerson Station State Park has been home to fishermen and boaters until damage to the dam caused the park to drain Duke Lake in July of 2005. The lake, once holding warm-water game fish still has not been repaired.

Although mining has not been established as the only cause of the crack in the dam, which led to the draining of the lake, it has been established as a significant cause of the damage. This lake once contributed to a major source of recreation provided by Ryerson Station State Park. Now, it is nothing but an empty lake bed. Although the lake is already drained, we, as a community, can still show our disapproval of the mining companies taking over our land, our communities, and the recreational places we share with our families.

Please join the Center for Coalfield Justice as we raise awareness of what happened to Duke Lake in Ryerson Station State Park. We will be holding our **DRYerson Festival** with games and activities for families and community members on June 2nd from 11-2pm, to show that we will not stand for more damage done to our land and our communities.

Among the events we will be having are casting lessons, casting contest, fish tale contest (come up with your best story as to why the lake is dry), kayak bean bag toss, wackiest fishing hat contest. For the kids we'll have a coloring contest, mini fishing pond and other games.

If you have any questions, contact Rebekah Weigel at (724)229-3550 or [rebekah@coalfieldjustice.org](mailto:rebekah@coalfieldjustice.org).

Visit our new website at  
[www.coalfieldjustice.org](http://www.coalfieldjustice.org)

## New Staff

Rebekah Weigel joined the Center in April as our Community Organizer. Rebekah graduated from St. Vincent College where she was involved with Amnesty International. Her experience also includes being an instructor for adult literacy and GED classes.

Rebekah's duties will include working with our current member groups and helping to establish new community groups working on coalfield issues.

Originally from Steubenville, Rebekah and her husband Jesse now reside in Washington.

Contact Rebekah by calling the office or at [rebekah@coalfieldjustice.org](mailto:rebekah@coalfieldjustice.org).

The Center will have 2 summer interns starting May 21st. Michele Modery is the Assistant Organizer and Caitlin Campbell is the Administrative Assistant. Michele attends Villanova University as a History and Honors major. Caitlin attends Grinnell College as Political Science major.

Please join us in welcoming our new staff members.

## Volunteer Night May 23

We will be having our first official volunteer night in our new office. The event will be Wednesday, May 23rd from 6:30-9pm. The night will give volunteers a chance to meet the staff, see the new office, and help with upcoming projects. We will be working on tasks for the DRYerson Festival along with other tasks.

Volunteers are encouraged to call before hand, but everyone is welcome to stop by. Refreshments will be served.

**I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the community and as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work, the more I live.**  
*George Bernard Shaw*



# Coal Bed Methane (CBM)

Coal Bed Methane (CBM) extraction is an issue with which the Center has recently become involved. What is CBM? Simply put, it is primarily methane gas trapped within coal seams. When plant material is converted into coal, methane gas is created. This gas is bonded to the coal surface by pressure from overlying rock, soil and the surrounding water table. CBM can be extracted from coal seams and used for energy.

In order to efficiently produce CBM, a well must be drilled. There are several types of CBM wells including: vertical well producing from one coal seam, vertical well producing from several coal seams, vertical well drilled into one coal seam with a series of horizontal bores extending out through the coal, all producing from the same seam, vertical well drilled through multiple coal seams with laterals completed in and producing from these seams, and former gob gas vents converted to CBM production.

What are your rights? If you do not own the coal rights to your property, you do not own the coal bed methane. Many companies practicing coalbed methane extraction assert that they have the absolute right to do what they please with your property in the process of constructing and operating methane wells. Many attorneys familiar with the issue, however, believe this not to be true, and believe the company's approach MUST BE REASONABLE, with property owners having several rights.

Be sure to request a copy of the permit application from DEP for a well that is to be installed on your property. You are entitled to this! Also, to read some agreements (both good and bad) negotiated between CBM companies and private landowners, visit our website (go to [www.coalfieldjustice.org/wiki](http://www.coalfieldjustice.org/wiki) and click on CBM).

The Center sponsored community forums at W&J College in Washington and St. Vincent College in Latrobe. We have had several strategy meetings with people interested in dealing with this issue. If you would like to become part of the strategy group, contact our office and visit our website for more information.

# Logo Contest

Get you creative juices flowing and help us find a new logo. As part of our reorganization into the Center for Coalfield Justice, we need to create a logo that will represent our commitment to justice in the coalfields.

We are looking for a logo that is simple, produces well in color and black & white, and can be used on signs, banners, letterhead, and our website. The winner will receive a \$150 award, and selected entries will be displayed in the Center for Coalfield Justice's Offices.

The entrant form can be found on our website or can be obtained by calling our office. Entrants may submit the entry and entrant form by e-mail to [info@coalfieldjustice.org](mailto:info@coalfieldjustice.org) or by regular mail to Center for Coalfield Justice Logo Contest, P.O. Box 1080, Washington, PA 15301 or in person at the Center's office at 96 East Chestnut Street. The deadline for submissions is May 31, 2007. Questions can be directed to the Center for Coalfield Justice at 724-229-3550 or [info@coalfieldjustice.org](mailto:info@coalfieldjustice.org).

# New Ways to Contribute

The Center for Coalfield Justice is now registered with iGive.com. By shopping with iGive.com, a percentage of your bill will be donated to the Center. Just click on the category you want to shop for, and designate at checkout that you would like a portion of your bill to go to the Center for Coalfield Justice. *There is no extra cost to you!*

Our website has 3 new categories for membership. For \$50, you can be a *Center Sponsor*, for \$100, you can be a *Center Champion*, and for \$500, you can be a *Lifetime member*. Visit our website at [www.coalfieldjustice.org](http://www.coalfieldjustice.org).



**Center for Coalfield Justice**

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Current resident or

.....  
**Please Join Us!**

Our members give us the resources we need to win the fight for justice in the coalfields. Without the generous donations of time and money from our members we would not have the ability to continue our mission. Become a member of the Center for Coalfield Justice today and join the fight for justice!

Detach and fill out this form, then mail it along with your donation to the address below:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$10 individual

\_\_\_\_\_ \$15 family

\_\_\_\_\_ \$25 group/business

\_\_\_\_\_ \$5 student/senior

\_\_\_\_\_ donation (tax-deductible)

Make checks payable to:

**Center for Coalfield Justice**

**PO Box 1080**

**Washington, PA 15301**

If you have any questions, please call us at 724.229.3550

The official registration and financial information of the Center for Coalfield Justice may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.