

Gas firms can be partners in making roads safer

Written by

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Our community lost a truly outstanding young woman on Christmas Day 2010. A tragic motor vehicle accident along a sharp curve on Thompson Hill Road took the life of Jennica Stryker of Troy. While mourning her loss, Jennica's family selflessly raised awareness of road safety and recommended a guardrail be established along Thompson Hill Road.

Martha Stryker, Jennica's grandmother, penned a letter to the editor and contacted me to express her concerns. I visited the site on Thompson Hill Road where the accident took place. A guardrail would undoubtedly provide a measure of safety and reduce the likelihood of another fatality.

Energy companies in Bradford County have expressed a willingness to partner with our municipalities to make infrastructure improvements. Although the tragic accident that took young Jennica's life was not the result of industry-generated traffic, I contacted Scott Tompkins of Talisman Energy and made him aware of the need for guardrails on Thompson Hill Road. Talisman Energy pledged to fund the construction of 700 feet of guardrail. Board

Chairman Stan Sterling and his fellow South Creek Township supervisors also earned commendation for their full support of this project.

Marcellus Shale development has been an economic boon to Bradford County. We lead the state in job growth, and capital investment in our county by energy companies is unrivaled. The increase in development-related activity has resulted in increased traffic and motor vehicle-related accidents. Road safety is of paramount concern to Bradford County residents.

Our approach to road safety needs to be systemic. Drivers education instructors, community organizations and public safety agencies are important partners in ensuring drivers use an abundance of caution when operating a motor vehicle.

After calling for a Road Safety Summit, which was held Jan. 25, representatives from the natural gas industry, local government and public safety agencies

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came together to take actions that will reduce the number and severity of traffic accidents. Talisman Energy presented its road safety program that has been implemented in Bradford County. Its comprehensive program should serve as a template for industry players throughout the Marcellus Shale region.

Talisman Energy's commitment to road safety, its willingness to work with South Creek Township, and its investment in infrastructure and road safety is commendable and emblematic of its efforts to forge a partnership with our community to address concerns presented by Marcellus Shale development.

McLinko is a Bradford County commissioner.

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