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Landowners coalition formed

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Mike White and Phil Knapp, two local landowners and businessmen, announce the formation of the Twin Tiers Landowners Coalition, Inc., a new natural gas landowner leasing group operating in the states of New York and Pennsylvania.

"We have formed a new organization for the benefit of landowners in both states. The primary reason that we created this new entity was that we wanted professional representation of our landowner interests," said White. "We have hired the very best professionals to assist our landowners in getting the best possible deal, and there is no charge to the landowners for these professional services."

Gregory H. Sovas, president, XRM,LLC has more than 40 years experience in the environmental field and is the former director of the Division of Mineral Resources at the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation where he served for 22 of his 33 years at NYSDEC. Adam Schultz, partner, Gilberti Stinziano Heintz & Smith, P.C. has extensive mineral resource and environmental experience in one of the premier environmental law firms in the state. Both of these professionals will be the primary consultants.

"Our initial focus will be in Tioga County, Pennsylvania and Steuben County, N.Y., although it is likely that we will continue our efforts across the state as we see a need," said White. "We wouldn't have ventured into a new coalition if we didn't think that we could get the best deal for our landowners. Greg and Adam know the oil and gas business and have contacts throughout government and the industry."

White said that the coalition has established a Web site at www.twintl.com where landowners can find information and sign up if they desire to do so. The primary focus of the coalition will be on the business side. Contacts have already been made with a number of companies to promote competition for the rights to the leasing of these lands. Some of these companies are not operating currently in Pennsylvania or New York. While marketing and promotion will be a central focus of the coalition, there will be no sacrifice of landowner protections.

"We believe that our professional representation, at no cost to the landowners, will give our landowners the best chance of receiving a timely and fair offer, while protecting and preserving their properties and the environment," White added.

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