

The Heavy Municipal Burdens of Hosting Shale Gas

The **sharp decline in property values** that accompanies gas drilling **erodes the tax base**, reducing the amount of money available **for local schools, police, firefighters, EMS, and other community services**. Local governments are even more cash-strapped because of increased demand for all of the same services.



In New Brunswick, the province provides many of these services, so **costs will be spread to all taxpayers**.

Gas workers don't contribute anything to alleviate these problems, because they typically maintain out-of-province residence and pay no local income taxes. The stories and quotes below from municipal officers in shale gas impacted areas are from news stories.

Housing & Living Cost Increases Hard on Longtime Residents

The price of groceries, gasoline and basic commodities has also gone up in areas with drilling, leaving most long-time residents under greater financial pressure.

State housing officials say escalating rents are forcing longtime residents to leave.

"Housing costs of all types are escalating much faster than income growth," said Mike Anderson, executive director of the North Dakota Housing Finance Agency.

Rents for a two-bedroom suite without utilities skyrocketed from \$350 a month to \$2,000. Some workers report paying \$4,000 a month for a three-bedroom apartment in Williston, ND.

Housing in the county has been swamped by drill rig operators from out of town, making affordable housing for the locals very hard to find.

Marlene Midget, executive director for Northern Panhandle Head Start (West Virginia), said affordable housing "has all but disappeared in the area." "Now people are on the street because

they don't have affordable housing for their families," she said.

In Casper, Wyoming robust growth in oil and gas drilling has also made it nearly impossible for struggling families to find apartments. They are out of reach for the working poor.

Increasing Crime Rates Evident in Areas of High Drilling

- In Dickinson, North Dakota police report a 400% increase in burglary investigations, a 300% increase in assault and sex crimes, and a 200% increase in property crime



investigations. Mayor Dennis Johnson blames the oil boom.

- Busching & Williston police are scrambling to hire, but say they can't pay enough for their new officers to afford the high rents.
- Driving under the influence and assaults have spiked. Southwestern Wyoming's booming gas fields also have seen a rise in rowdy behavior.
- Bradford County, Pennsylvania's most heavily drilled county, saw increases in arrests, traffic violations, protection-from-abuse orders and warrants issued for people who don't show up in court, law enforcement officials said.
- In Bradford County, PA, DUI arrests were on track to rise 40 percent in 2010 after climbing 60 percent in 2009. 2010 sentences for criminal offenses were up 35 percent. The flood of arrests is such that the county's van is no longer big enough to transport all the inmates at once from jail to court.

Schools in High Drilling Areas Report Little Benefit from Shale Gas



Shale gas development hasn't resulted in significant benefits for Pennsylvania school districts. While **areas with high drilling activity** report a short-term upswing in local economic activity, **little, if any, benefit accrues back to schools.**

To the contrary, it has triggered a variety of related concerns in some districts—particularly for those in the closest proximity to drilling activity:

- Problems with road congestion, damage, and repair, and schedules as well as public safety,
- Significantly tightened housing markets, dramatic increases in housing rental costs, and increased residential insecurity and homelessness,
- Concerns regarding water quality, especially in cases in which district buildings rely on well water,
- Concerns regarding recruitment and retention of key staff (e.g., bus drivers), when district salaries cannot keep pace with gas industry-related salaries.

Marcellus Shale gas boom has uneven results for schools, July 11, 2013, Penn State News, Kai Schafft



Emergency Services Stretched to Limit

“No one ever anticipated this type of impact,” said Donald W. Longmuir Jr., a planner and emergency coordinator for Mountrail County, North Dakota. **“We’re actually three to five years behind in funding.”** Calls to the volunteer ambulance and fire services tripled since 2009. **“A few years ago, our board set a goal that Mountrail County would be a better place to live and work as this oil play works itself out ...”**he said. **“Right now, I would be hard-pressed to find people who agree with that.”**



For more detailed information, read:

- *Living with fracking's fallout*, <http://www.newsobserver.com/2012/06/07/2118984/living-with-frackings-fallout.html>. Bob Kochersberger
- *North Dakota Oil Boom Increases Crime, Costs, Road Mayhem*, Nov. 2011, South Dakota Madville Times
- *Drilling boom brings surge in crime to small towns*, October 26, 2011, Marc Levy, www.businessweek.com/ap/financialnews/D9QJR3I01.htm
- *When 'Williston experiment' turns to homelessness, churches step in*, Pamela King, E&E reporter, Energy Wire: Wednesday, March 20, 2013
- *Hearing Held On Child Poverty, June 20, 2013*, Joselyn - Political Writer, The Intelligencer / Wheeling, WV News-Register
- *Natural Gas Exposed: Home Invasion*, [/www.waterdefense.org/content/natural-gas-exposed-home-invasion](http://www.waterdefense.org/content/natural-gas-exposed-home-invasion)