

Observer-Reporter

'Gasland' film focuses on dangers of drilling

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Trish Adlesic is using her talents in the television and film industry to bring awareness to her native Pittsburgh about dangers associated with natural gas drilling.

Adlesic is the producer of the documentary "Gasland," which will be shown at no charge at 7 p.m. tonight at the Byham Theater in Pittsburgh. Doors open at 6 p.m.

The documentary was written and filmed by Josh Fox, who lives across the Delaware River from Adlesic - she in Callicoon, N.Y., and he in Milanville, Pa.

Fox decided to do the film after he was approached by gas drillers offering to lease his property for \$100,000.

The documentary follows Fox as he tours the United States, talking to people who leased their property for drilling and later regretted doing so. Many of them lost livestock or suffered health concerns. Their drinking water was so contaminated that in some cases the homeowner is shown lighting a match next to a kitchen sink and having it erupt into flames.

In his film, Fox begins to wonder if what he witnesses in Colorado or Wyoming is what will take place near his own backyard.

Adlesic wonders too how it will affect her hometown as she hears reports of drilling being proposed for Kennywood and Frick parks.

"I think it's important people are not blinded by dollars. This kind of activity is so destructive and expensive to clean up," she said. She noted that drilling in the Marcellus Shale already draws 48 million gallons of water from the Monongahela River a day with 14 million gallons worth of brine water returned to the river.

In a review, Variety magazine said the film could be to the gas drilling industry what Silent Spring was to DDT use. HBO will air it June 21. The documentary also won the special jury prize at the Sundance Film Festival earlier this year.

"I was elated; it gives us a voice," Adlesic said.

"Gasland" is not without its critics. Kathryn Klaber, president and executive director of the Marcellus Shale coalition, said "Our understanding, based on previews of the film, is that it's loaded with

misleading claims and untruths, and completely fails to recognize the well-known fact that hydraulic fracturing has been used in this state for a half-century, and according to state and federal regulators, has never once been found to adversely impact the public's underground drinking water supplies."

One glaring error in the film is the suggestion that gas drilling led to the September fish kill at Dunkard Creek in Greene County. That was determined to have been caused by a golden algae bloom from mine drainage from a CONSOL Energy discharge.

The film is at its best when depicting real people feeling helpless after state and federal agencies that they believed were created to help them now inform them there is nothing that can be done.

A panel discussion after tonight's screening will feature Adlesic and Fox along with Myron Arnowitt, from Clean Water Auction, Nel Mulchay, Three Rivers Waterkeepers, Dr. Dan Volz of the Center for Health Environments and Communities and others.

Adlesic said Pittsburgh Mayor Luke Ravenstahl is unable to attend and she remains disturbed that she did not receive one response to her e-mails and telephone calls inviting the nine members of the city's council.