

MIDWEST DIGEST

Johanns To TransCanada: Be Fair On Land

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. Sen. Mike Johanns on Wednesday urged a Canadian company that wants to build an oil pipeline to the Gulf of Mexico to be fair in its negotiations with Nebraska landowners.

In a letter to TransCanada President and CEO Russell Girling, the Nebraska Republican said he's heard from residents who've been threatened with use of eminent domain if they don't sell their land for the Keystone XL project.

TransCanada spokeswoman Terry Cunha said Wednesday that the company is committed to working with landowners and will only use eminent domain as a last resort.

Cunha said TransCanada worked out deals with about 400 Nebraska landowners on the first part of the Keystone project and reached a mutual agreement in 99 percent of cases.

Keystone XL would move oil from Canada through Montana, along the border of North Dakota and across South Dakota and Nebraska. The pipeline then would hook up with another pipeline in Kansas and move oil through Oklahoma and Texas.

Rex Pioneers Niobrara Shale Oil

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) — The first of potentially dozens of new oil wells in Laramie County is being drilled by Rex Energy Corp. State College, Pa.-based Rex began drilling the well 14 miles northeast of Cheyenne on July 22. The company expects to finish drilling in a couple weeks.

Excitement has become widespread that new drilling techniques could unlock large amounts of oil from the Niobrara Shale beneath eastern Wyoming, northern Colorado and western Nebraska.

The techniques include horizontal drilling. Information from the state Oil and Gas Conservation Commission shows the Rex well is going 8,000 feet down. Rex President and CEO Benjamin Hulbert says the well also will be drilled 4,000 feet sideways.

"At this point we plan to drill at least two wells this year and potentially six, with the intent of moving into a full-scale drilling program in 2011," he said.

So far this year, the Wyoming Oil and Gas Conservation Commission has approved 77 permits for several companies to drill oil wells in the state's southeast corner. That far surpasses all previous activity in that area.

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Sanford Creates Native American Health Office

BY DIRK LAMMERS
Associated Press Writer

SIOUX FALLS — The largest hospital system in the Dakotas is launching a new effort to reach out to residents of the region's Native American reservations, hospital officials announced Wednesday.

Leading Sanford Health's new Office of Native American Health will be Dr. Donald Warne, a member of the Oglala Lakota tribe from Pine Ridge. He will coordinate activities among the hospital system, the federal Indian Health Service and the 28 tribes within Sanford's coverage region, which spans South Dakota, North Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa and Nebraska, said Mark Johnston, a Sanford Health vice president.

"It's an important step to try to improve the health and welfare of the folks on different reservations

in Sanford Health's service area," Johnston said Wednesday.

Warne most recently served as head of the Aberdeen Area Tribal Chairmen's Health Board, a Rapid City-based organization that acts as a liaison between Native Americans and the federal Indian Health Service. He also is an instructor at Arizona State University's law school, where he teaches Native American health policy.

He said the new effort will help address health disparities between Native Americans and other residents.

"Diabetes and related conditions seem to occur at a much higher rate in Native American communities, particularly here in the Northern Plains," Warne said. "With high rates of diabetes, we also see high rates of things like kidney failure and subsequent needs for locally available dialysis services."

Warne met with members of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe in Pine Ridge on Wednesday to discuss a collaboration between tribal communities, Sanford and Novo Nordisk, a diabetes pharmaceutical company. On Thursday, he will meet with residents of the White Earth Indian Reservation in Minnesota about their needs for dialysis.

Sanford does not have clinics or hospitals on reservations, but many of its facilities serve Native American patients, Johnston said.

Sanford in June announced it would establish a digital mammography center in Chamberlain to help underserved women in central South Dakota, including those on the nearby Crow Creek and Lower Brule reservations. It is being funded with a \$489,300 grant over three years from the charitable trust established by

the late hotel and real estate

baroness Leona Helmsley. The Sanford Health Network also will provide about \$372,000 for a 16-passenger van that will travel to Native American reservations and communities in remote areas in a three-county area, providing transportation for women to and from the digital mammography facility.

As part of treaties signed by the Sioux Nation in the late 1800s, the federal government agreed to provide medical care on Native American reservations.

The government-run Indian Health Service today runs hospitals and clinics on most reservations. But critics long have complained of insufficient financial support that has led to constant turnover among doctors and nurses, understaffed hospitals, sparse specialty care and long waits to see a doctor.

Neb. Rep. Wants Tighter Immigration Laws

BY MARGERY A. BECK
Associated Press Writer

FREMONT, Neb. — Rep. Jeff Fortenberry said Wednesday that he favors repealing the constitutional provision that grants automatic citizenship to children born in the U.S., saying it shouldn't apply when parents are illegal immigrants.

"I don't think the 14th amendment actually was meant to apply to modern circumstances," the Nebraska Republican told about

50 people who attended his town hall meeting in Fremont, where voters recently approved a local ban on hiring or renting property to illegal immigrants.

Fortenberry also said he would like to see tighter U.S. border security, a streamlining of the federal process to become a U.S. citizen and a crackdown on unscrupulous employers who knowingly hire illegal immigrants.

"If we put a few CEOs in jail who have been willfully involved

in this stuff, then you'll see a change," Fortenberry said.

The congressman heard from several constituents regarding immigration reform, which has divided Fremont in recent months. Some residents say the voter-approved ordinance makes up for lax federal law enforcement of immigration laws, while others believe it could fuel discrimination.

The Rev. Michael Ostrom, a Lutheran pastor, asked about the

moral implications of such laws.

"Is it just and humane to suddenly uproot these people from their homes and tear families apart?" Ostrom asked.

Fortenberry replied that distinctions should be made between people who are looking to take advantage of the system, such as employers recruiting illegal immigrants and paying them "under the table," and those who are ill or elderly or "have no other recourse" than to find refuge in the U.S.

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