



May 2023 Newsletter
Hello from Arthur Stewart, Secretary

Sad News

With heavy heart we report that our friend, and PGCC member, Justin Curtis, died in an oil-field accident, May 2, 2023, near the headquarters of his business in Sugar Grove, PA. Justin was the son of PGCC Board member, Jay Curtis and his wife, Julie. Justin and his brothers, Jacoby, Jameson and Jayson, operated Curtis and Son Oil, Inc.

Justin grew up in the oil business and loved his profession and the outdoors where he worked. Justin had a terrific sense of humor that he brought to the members of his own company and to the other companies that hired Curtis Oil to perform well services.



While highly regarded in the conventional industry, Justin was especially known as a father and husband. To know Justin was to hear him talk about his wife and three young children. More information is contained in the obituary reprinted, below, including information on the foundation

where memorial contributions can be made. Or if you desire to provide meals or help for Justin's family you can go to the Facebook group: "Love for the Curtis Family."

With all of the opposition heaped on us by the woke hypocrites who use our oil and gas products, we sometimes take our eye off how dangerous this business can be. Everyone in the patch, from well tenders to roustabouts, takes daily risks to keep Americans warm and fed. Thank you Justin. Thank you Curtis and Son Oil. Our hearts are deeply saddened by this devastating loss.

JUSTIN CURTIS OBITUARY

Justin Tanner Curtis, 40, of Sugar Grove, was welcomed into the arms of Jesus on Tuesday, May 2, 2023 after an unexpected accident.

A loving husband, father, son, brother, uncle and friend, Justin was born on October 15, 1982 in Warren, Pa to Jay and Julie (Phillips) Curtis.

Justin is survived by his wife, Amber (Ristau) Curtis, whom he married on June 18, 2011; children, Kinley (11), Leyton (9), and Landry (7); parents, Jay and Julie Curtis of Sugar Grove; brothers, Jayson (Kalee) Curtis, Jacoby (Elizabeth) Curtis and Jameson (Chelsea) Curtis all of Warren; paternal grandmother, Dorothy Curtis of Sugar Grove; and eight nieces and nephews.

Justin was a 2001 graduate of Eisenhower High School and went on to earn a Bachelor's Degree in Business Management and Marketing from Penn State Altoona. He then began working in the family business, Curtis Oil, where he took great pride in his role.

He was an exceptional father and husband and his world revolved around his family. When he wasn't working hard to provide for his family, his favorite pass times were spending quality time with family and friends – camping, hunting and being outdoors. He was an active member of Echo Valley Houndsmen Coyote Group.

Justin had a vibrant personality that could light up any room and was dearly loved by many. No one can forget his genuine smile, long hugs, heartfelt conversations and great sense of humor. He went out of his way to make others smile and feel loved.

Justin is preceded in death by his maternal grandparents, Willis and Marjorie Phillips; and paternal grandfather, Bud Curtis and uncle, Todd Curtis.

Friends will be received at Praise Fellowship, 7451 Market St., Russell, PA, on Sunday, May 7, 2023, from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. A funeral service will be held at Praise Fellowship on Monday, May 8, 2023, at 11:00 a.m., with Reverend Keith Barreto, and Reverend A.J. Maze, associate pastors, officiating.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Curtis Family Foundation (501c 3) and sent to 9485 Route 957, Sugar Grove, PA 16350.

To share a memory or leave a condolence, please visit <https://www.petersonblickfuneralhome.com/>

Democrats in Harrisburg Seek to Undo Last Year's Legislation

Last summer the Governor signed Act 96, legislation that insures reasonable well bonding for conventional oil and gas wells. The legislation was drafted in response to a 2021 effort, by radical environmental groups, requesting that Department of Environmental Resources (DEP) and the Environmental Quality Board (EQB), impose a mammoth bonding increase for conventional wells. Asserting that it costs \$33,000 to plug the average conventional well, the radical groups asked EQB to do away with blanket bonding, and increase conventional well bonds to \$38,000 PER WELL. A conventional operator with 100 post-1984 wells would see the bond requirement increase from the current \$25,000 blanket bond to a total bond amount of \$3.8 million. The push was a not-so-hidden attempt to drive conventional oil and gas operators out of business.

PGCC identified bonding as its primary legislative goal in 2022, and several legislators, including Senator Scott Hutchinson and Representatives Marty Causer and Kathy Rapp took up the cause. House staff drafted legislation that was sponsored by Representative Causer and co-sponsored by Representatives Rapp, Armanini, Brooks, Hennessey, Hershey, James, Moul, Oberlander, Owlett, Picket, Ryan, Zimmerman and others. The Legislation became Act 96 that preserved the bonding amount of \$2,500 per well. Act 96 also preserved the concept of a blanket bond, with that bond increasing to a maximum of \$100,000, at the rate of an additional \$1,000 for every new well drilled.

On April 19, 2023, Democratic Chairman of the House Environmental Resources and Energy (ERE) Committee, Greg Vitali, introduced HB 962, designed to roll back Act 96 and do away with a single blanket bond, altogether. On April 24, 2023, the ERE Committee held a hearing where invited speakers included the Sierra Club, the Environmental Defense Fund, David Hess of the PA Environmental Digest, and DEP. Arthur Stewart of Cameron Energy was invited to testify on behalf of the conventional oil and gas industry.

During its testimony the Sierra Club repeated the erroneous figure of \$33,000 to plug the average conventional well (entirely ignoring the differences between conventional gas and oil wells). The Sierra Club and others testified repeatedly that high bonds were the magic solution to preventing abandoned wells in Pennsylvania. The DEP, Hess, EDF and Sierra Club all lumped orphan and abandoned wells into one category, with the sloppy phrase: "orphan/abandoned wells" being thrown about frequently.

In comments after the hearing Representative Marty Causer pointed out the factual mistakes made by the testifiers. "These groups claim wells are being abandoned in large numbers across the Commonwealth, and that simply isn't true," Causer said. "The 'hundreds of thousands' of wells to which they refer are those that were dug many decades or even more than a century ago for which the responsible party is no longer living. Rather than blame today's operators for these legacy wells, we should be working together to plug them."

During his testimony PGCC member, Arthur Stewart addressed several key points:

- There is a difference between orphan and abandoned wells. Orphan wells are ancient wells, abandoned long ago, and for which there is no responsible party. An abandoned well typically belongs to a known responsible party and is considered abandoned when

it hasn't produced for a period of 12 months. DEP's database shows 1,836 abandoned wells in the Commonwealth. The number of orphan wells is not known but is estimated to be more than 200,000.

- DEP has more effective tools than bonding to go after a company that abandons wells, including civil and criminal penalties, fines and even jail time.
- Higher bonding will not aid in plugging orphan wells, which pose the biggest challenge to the Commonwealth. It would, however, have dire consequences for small operators who would be forced to tie up greater capital in bonding, leaving less money available for updated equipment or salaries for employees.

Stewart pointed out that over the last 5 years the DEP has seized only 2 bonds from conventional operators. Stewart made the observation that if bonding was an effective tool then bond seizures would be used much more often by DEP.

He continued by saying: "Conventional wells drilled since the imposition of bonding are not being abandoned like a fast-spreading cancer, and the outcry for higher bonding amounts is not supported by the statistical data. We are tired of fighting demagogues who preach a false narrative to pursue a global environmental agenda," Stewart testified. "Every year my company plugs more wells than it drills; and my company has NO abandoned wells. There is no need to punish my company, and the entire cadre of responsible conventional operators, via unnecessary bonding, when: 1) bonded wells are not being abandoned at a reckless pace; and 2) the state already has an adequate solution in the laws that exist."

Stewart closed his testimony by inviting committee members to visit conventional operations to see the wells conventional operators responsibly and routinely plug, the employees whose jobs would be in peril if unnecessary higher bonding is implemented and the people who can plug wells for half of what it costs DEP to do so.

View the entirety of Stewart's testimony here: <https://s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/pagopvideo/589561344.mp4>

To watch the full hearing, click here: <https://s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/pagopvideo/995447930.mp4>

IRRC Advances Emergency VOC Emission Rule

On April 20, 2023, Pennsylvania's Independent Regulatory Review Commission (IRRC) reviewed the DEP's VOC Emission Rule (See the PGCC December 2022 Newsletter) for conformity with law. The IRRC consists of 5 members, 3 appointed by Democratic legislators, and 2 appointed by Republican legislators.

Attorney Jean Mosites and PGCC member Arthur Stewart testified about problems with the rule. The 5 IRRC Commissioners took an interest in the questions/problems raised by Mr. Stewart. Although the rule eventually passed by a party-line vote of 3 to 2, the Commissioner expressed concern that the DEP could not answer the VOC Emission questions posed by Mr. Stewart.

In an unusual move the IRRR Commissioners asked DEP to consult with Mr. Stewart, in the future, in order to answer those questions. The IRRR Commissioners reminded DEP that the DEP appears before the IRRR frequently and that the IRRR expected the DEP to answer the VOC Emission questions in good faith.

Following the meeting the DEP initiated contact not only with Mr. Stewart of PGCC, but also with PIOGA and PIPP, concerning a meeting to address the questions. Mr. Stewart delivered to the DEP and the IRRR a summary of the questions that Mr. Stewart raised at the hearing. Those questions are reprinted below.

Meantime, the hearing can be viewed at these two links (parts 1 and 2): [04-20-23 Public Meeting Part 1 of 2.mp4 on Vimeo](#) and [04-20-23 Public Meeting Part 2 of 2.mp4 on Vimeo](#)

VOC Emission Questions unanswered by DEP concerning the new definition of “Well Site” that defines “Well Site” as including: “separate tank battery surface site” that collects fluids from “a well not located at the well site,” where the separate tank battery surface site does not produce any oil or gas

Questions posed in association with IRRR hearing 4-20-2023

1. What device(s) must be installed upon and what monitoring must be performed at a “separate tank battery surface site” (as that term is used in the definition of “Well Site”) that does not produce any oil and gas but collects, on average, more than 15 barrels per day?
2. What are the costs of the installation and operation of device(s) and the monitoring at a “separate tank battery surface site” that collects more than 15 barrels of oil equivalent per day?
 - a. How does the availability/unavailability of electricity at the site affect costs?
 - b. How many conventional oil and gas “separate tank battery surface sites” did PADEP consider as part of its RACT analysis?
 - i. Please share the RACT analysis(es) for such well sites.
 - c. What is the RACT analysis for that “separate tank battery site” where no oil or gas is produced?
3. What monitoring or other steps will be required at a single “well not located at the well site” that is connected to the separate tank battery surface site that would not otherwise have been required to comply with the VOC Regulation because it produces less than 5 barrels of oil equivalent per day, but which may be required to comply by virtue of its connection to the separate tank battery?
 - a. How many such wells are there?
 - b. Please share the RACT analysis(es) for individual well sites.

Introducing Conventional Oil and Gas to New Legislators

Approximately 50 new legislators took office in Harrisburg at the beginning of this legislative session. Some of those legislators are not aware of the existence of conventional oil and gas operations in Pennsylvania. Few can describe the great differences between the conventional oil and gas industry and the unconventional industry.

PGCC Board members and associates have already made several trips, to Harrisburg, to meet with freshmen legislators. PGCC members share pictures of conventional and unconventional well sites and explain differences in well size, pressure, cost, etc. Discussions can range from the family-owned nature of conventional oil and gas businesses, to the unreliability of wind and solar as energy sources.

This year David Clark, Paul Morris, Wally and Sue Phillips, and Arthur Stewart and his daughter Meg have made treks. Regardless of party, the new legislators are amazed to learn that all fertilizer is made from natural gas and that our conventional oil is used in manufacturing over 6000 household products. Some legislators have never been to the western part of the state, and an important function is to generate interest in visiting conventional well sites. PGCC will host several tours, in western Pennsylvania, later this summer.

Visits can also involve seeing old friends and taking a moment to appreciate the beauty of the Capitol. May 1 marked Meg Stewart's first visit to Harrisburg, and Senator Scott Hutchinson gave Meg a tour of the Senate chamber.



Meg Stewart on the Senate floor with Senator Hutchinson

If you would like to participate in one of the trips, or help host legislators during this summer's visits to western Pennsylvania, send a note to or call PGCC Secretary, Judy Saf.

SUPPORT OUR MEMBERS:

PGCC is fortunate to have a growing membership that includes valued service providers. We urge you to support our service members!!!

Jean M. Mosites
Attorney at Law
jmosites@babstcalland.com



Two Gateway Center
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
Direct 412.394.6468
Main 412.394.5400
Fax 412.586.1051
www.babstcalland.com

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THE RESCHINI GROUP

Matt J. Bernini
Account Executive

Laurel Place, 922 Philadelphia Street
Indiana, PA 15701-3940

Desk: 724.463.5921
Cell: 724.599.5498
Fax: 724.349.6616
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Mark Miller, P.G.

Vice President
mmiller@moody-s.com

11548 Cotton Road
Suite 101
Meadville, PA 16335

814.724.4970 office
814.720.0629 cell
814.724.4973 fax
800.836.5040

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MATTHEW L. WOLFORD
ATTORNEY AT LAW

Wolford Law
638 West 6th Street
Eric, PA 16507
E-mail: mwolford@wolfordlaw.com

814/459-9600
Fax: 814/459-9661

ROBERT S. TAYLOR, ESQ.
CHAIRMAN AND CEO

THE CAMERON COMPANIES, LLC
PO Box 220
SOLEBURY, PA 18963

PHONE: 215-489-5300
FAX: 215-489-5301
CELL: 215-801-2295
EMAIL: RST@CAMERON-COMPANIES.COM

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David Cook
Crude Oil Relationship Manager
dcook@amref.com
814-598-1607

Bill Murray
VP - Crude Supply & Logistics
bmurray@amref.com
330-224-4408



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333 Allegheny
Avenue
Suite 201
Oakmont, PA 15139

Chris Klonowski – Openhole Mgn.
(724-859-7373)

Garry Rex – Casedhole Mgn.
(724-705-3942)

Marty Comini – COO
(412-260-9040)

Operation Location: 15771 Olean Trail, Strattanville, PA 15139 (Corsica Shop)

Equipment & Service Description

- 1) **Description:** 3 Complete Wireline Units setup to run Openhole and Casedhole Services. With 2 additional Wireline units in yard. Equipment was built and designed to handle the terrain of the Appalachian's, and the specific needs of the Energy business.
- 2) **Safety:** ATF & NRC Licenses for all operating States. Registered with ISNetworld with a "A" rating. OOSH 300A forms with ZERO incidents since conception (Sept. 2014). All training and safety audits up to date.
- 3) **Personal:** Keystone Wireline staff has many years of field, sales, and management experience dealing with all aspects of wireline work, including Plug-n-Abandonment, Openhole, Casedhole, Cavern, and Porosity storage operations. The team has between 20 plus years of experience for each individual in the wireline industry, making the staff experience leader in the industry.



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