The Life of a Natural Gas Well, Part 2
(or even MORE of everything you want to know about natural gas production)

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Life of a Natural Gas Well (Part 2)

In our last issue, we discussed the preparation of a well site and initial stages of the life of a well, including land leasing and surveying, ground preparation, surface foundation and vertical and horizontal drilling. In this issue we’ll discuss what happens after horizontal drilling is complete; what it takes to bring natural gas to market; and land restoration around a well pad.

Perforating Horizontal Well

After protective casing is installed throughout the well, the horizontal section must be perforated to allow for hydraulic fracturing of the surrounding shale. First, a perforating gun is lowered to the targeted sections. Then, an electrical current is sent to the “perf gun” – setting off a charge that shoots small holes through the steel well casing and cement and into the shale formation.

Hydraulic Fracturing

Developed in the 1940s, hydraulic fracturing or “fracing” allows us to produce more natural gas while reducing the number of surface drill sites.

The process involves pumping pressurized frac fluids (primarily water and recycled frac fluid) and sand into the well bore and down the casing. The fluids are forced through the perforations and into the surrounding shale, causing fractures that allow previously trapped gas to flow into the well bore.

Without fracing, our nation would lose almost half of its natural gas production.
Supplying Energy to America

After a permanent wellhead is installed at the top of the well, we can begin producing natural gas from the well and flowing the gas to compressor stations that will move the gas along America's interstate of pipelines.

Cabot uses existing pipelines that run from Texas through Pennsylvania and the American Northeast to deliver energy to homes, businesses and large industries that depend on this vital domestic energy source.

At this point, only the relatively small wellhead is left behind to continue producing gas and feeding the pipelines. Now it's time to restore the land to its natural state.

Back to Green with Land Restoration

Once a well pad is producing natural gas, we are committed to reducing its environmental impact through careful and extensive land restoration procedures. We regrade the site and plant new seed so the area becomes green and can be reclaimed by nature.

“If I hadn’t seen them...reclaim everything and replant I would never know that the gas pipeline and the wells are here. You have to really look hard to see where they were...”

Annie Dean
Susquehanna County Landowner

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Jerry Dugas
Drilling Superintendent

In Jerry’s position as Cabot’s Drilling Superintendent, he ensures the company’s drilling plans are carried out to strict specifications and that every Cabot employee involved in their operations understands the company’s commitment to zero tolerance for environmental infractions and employee safety.

The position requires an experienced professional, with many years of on-the-job training in both drilling management and directional drilling. A Drilling Superintendent touches every aspect of the drilling process and coordinates with the company’s geologists, land managers, sub-contractors and vendors.

In addition to ensuring the company’s environmental and safety commitments are rigidly enforced, Cabot’s Drilling Superintendent is akin to an orchestra conductor, overseeing the exact timing of the myriad elements involved in drilling a well. He oversees and coordinates the various groups of professionals that come together during the process to ensure a safe and efficient twenty-four hour operation.

Jerry and his wife love living in northeastern Pennsylvania. “We really like the people here,” he related. “And once the people get to know the oil and gas folks, they learn that we’re just like them.”