

# Seismic surveys, antique Pennsylvania infrastructure and the 'big fight' on the horizon

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By Anya Litvak / Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

For two days, trucks wandered through the streets of Aliquippa, thumping the ground with heavy metal plates and sending shockwaves deep into the earth to gauge how much natural gas lies beneath.

That part of the seismic survey didn't take long, but preparations for it — public hearings and panicked calls to the police — spanned more than a year.

The advance battle trekked through the courts, too.

Seitel Inc., a company hired by oil and gas companies to create a 3D map of the area's geology, filed two lawsuits against half a dozen townships in Beaver County and was the target of another filed by the two local water authorities.

The legal vibrations are starting to calm. But to some extent, the shockwave that has engulfed southern Beaver County is regarded by residents and township officials as the first line of offense against oil and gas development.

"I'm not for drilling," said Dwan Walker, Aliquippa's mayor.

The city tried to keep out Seitel but has since developed a good working relationship with the company as the result of a settlement to a lawsuit filed by Aliquippa's water authority in October.

"Progress is going to go on," Mr. Walker said. "I'm just concerned about what's in it for us? They're taking pictures of all this gas and we reap no benefits. Individuals will stand to make money, but the city as a whole ...."