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Estill is crippled by record snowfall

The worst storm of this century hit Estill County and the Commonwealth on Monday.

It has caused schools and businesses to close. Very low temperatures and more bad weather are predicted for the

next five days.

This late winter storm follows a relatively mild winter.

Weathermen forecast 12 to 16 inches for Estill County. Snow totals varied, but fell within this range.

On Tuesday, Melissa Neal Jessie of the Emergency Operations Center advised everyone to stay in, because she said roads are horrible, even in town.

State and county crews have worked on the road since the snow began falling. The county has plenty of salt this year but it will not work in these low temperatures.

Jessie stated the Estill County Rescue Squad has been busy transporting employees to the nursing home and hospital. The rescue squad has also taken a few people to doctor offices and picked up prescriptions.

She also said the Irvine Police Department has been helping the rescue squad out with transports and emergency deliveries.

Jessie stated that she does not see any relief in sight. Another 1-3 inches of snow is forecast for Wednesday and either a snow or ice storm on Friday.

She was very concerned about the below freezing temperatures. A minus 10 is

forecast, but Jessie said that is the actual temperature and not the wind chill.

With sub-freezing temperatures, residents often turn to alternative heat sources to stay warm. Jessie advises them to be extra careful with the alternate sources to prevent home fires.

She also recommends homeowners take precautions to make sure water pipes don't freeze.

Helping Hands, Inc. opened a warming center Monday from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. at Estill Springs Elementary.

"We had some boys walking last night. They came in and ate," said Debbie Rison of Helping Hands, Inc.

She added some men who had to be out working in the cold came in also and ate, but no one spent the entire night.

Rison said Helping Hands will keep the warming center open from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. as long as they have volunteers.

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Blakely Lauren Wiseman enjoyed the snow that fell on Monday. She is the daughter of Jeremy Wiseman and Hannah Reagan.



Chyanna Powell shared this cell phone photo with the Tribune. She said this was Jameson's first "big snow."



Rhonda Woosley used a ruler to measure the snow on Old Fox Road on Monday. Rulers were used at the beginning of the snowfall, but Estill Countians quickly switched to yard sticks.

Photo Submitted



Jennifer McCormick used the snow to make snow cream on Monday. There are a few recipes floating around on the internet, but make it to your taste using clean snow, milk, sugar, and vanilla flavoring.

Photo by J. McCormick

Crowd attends fracking meeting

by DELORES L. ROWLAND The Estill County Tribune

An informative meeting about Fracking was well attended at the Estill County Fair Barn last Thursday night.

The Irvine-Ravenna Kiwanis Club hosted the meeting. Moderator Tony White said the club wanted to present both sides of fracking to the public.

Fracking is short for hydraulic fracturing used in the production of oil and gas.

Xayra Asplen is a former Estill County resident, who now lives on Red Lick Road in Madison County.

She said she and her father were approached last fall about leasing their property to an oil company.

That's when she said she started educating herself about the new fracking. Oil and gas companies drill a mile or two down into the shale layer. Then the companies drill horizontally for about a mile.

They pump water and chemicals down which breaks up the shale layer which brings the oil or gas to the surface.

It also brings the water back up to the surface, along with chemicals which have been added.

Asplen said the procedure causes birth defects and contaminates drinking water sources. Fracking is also being considered as the cause of earthquakes.

The next anti-fracking speaker was Jim Scheff, director of Kentucky Heartwood, a non-profit group for forest preservation.

Scheff is also affiliated with the newly formed group, Frack Free Foothills. He presented a slide presentation on fracking.

"These fracking pads are huge. Five, ten, fifteen acres," he stated. The fracking pads are also called well pads.

"There's a lot of machinery going to be hauled on these roads," he added.

Millions of gallons of water are needed for the fracking process, and some water or brine is returned to the surface. The company may build impoundments to store water and brine.

Scheff also said the fracking wells are noisy.

Andrew McNeill, executive director of Kentucky Oil and Gas Association (KOGA) with the group.

McNeill stated there were over 3,200 Kentuckians employed in the gas and oil industry, and their average income was \$75,000 annually.

The industry pays an estimated \$40 million in taxes to the state and local governments.

Kentucky ranks 14th nationally in the number of oil wells and 16th in gas wells.

McNeill recommended that if a property owner was approached by a company wanting to lease their property, they should hire an attorney. He said the terms of the contract are negotiable.

Oil producing companies have leased properties in Estill County for over a hundred years.

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Former Estill resident, Xayra Asplen told of how she educated herself about fracking after she and her father were approached last fall by someone wanting to lease their land on Red Lick Road in Madison County.



A large crowd turned out Thursday night for an informational meeting on Fracking. The meeting was sponsored by the Irvine-Ravenna Kiwanis Club. Attempts were made to present both the pros and cons of fracking. A question and answer session followed the informational session.

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