

## Gas company seeks rate cut

By LAUREN McLANE  
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Natural-gas customers may see a decline in their gas bills over the summer after seeing increases just three months ago.

PG Energy has filed a request with the state Public Utilities Commission to decrease its gas-cost rates by 7.4 percent to \$1.01 per hundred cubic feet, down from \$1.09. The change became effective June 1.

The filing marks the third time this year PG Energy has requested a reduction in its gas cost, according to Donna M. Gillis, company spokeswoman.

The company re-examines its gas-cost rate quarterly, in March, June, September and December, she said.

"When we filed in February, it was an emergency filing on Feb. 1 because prices had gone down so much," she said.

The gas-cost rate is linked to the wholesale price of natural gas, which fluctuates, Gillis said.

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**"Supply has gone up, demand has weakened."**

Donna M. Gillis,  
spokeswoman,  
PG Energy

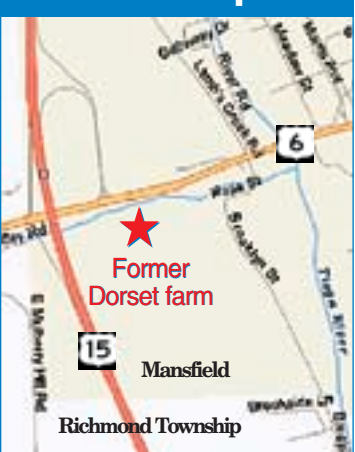
## Mansfield

### Industrial park plans move ahead

By CHERYL R. CLARKE  
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MANSFIELD — Plans for an industrial park to be developed here took another step Monday with the support of the borough Planning Commission.

#### Proposed industrial park



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During a special meeting, the commission heard from Tom Freeman, president of the Betterment Organization of Mansfield.

BOOM is a group of real estate developers and interested businesspeople who have traditionally worked to develop the community through grant acquisition and networking with other groups such as the Tioga County Development Corp.

During the meeting, the commission agreed to provide a letter of support for BOOM in its efforts to establish an industrial park on the former Dorset farm property off routes 6 and 15.

The 47-acre lot would be subdivided into up to 28 lots for new businesses, Freeman said.

Each lot will be "shovel ready" with complete access to infrastructure and utilities.

An access road to the site will be constructed off Route 6 with a bridge over Ellen Run to limit traffic to the site from Brooklyn Street, a nearby residential area.

Brooklyn Street is already heavily used as a shortcut to bypass the downtown area by residents going to businesses south of town, commission member Bill Bradshaw said.

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## Activity Day

Photos by  
MARK NANCE/  
Sun-Gazette



Loyalsock Township Middle School sixth-grader Heidi Womeldorf, top, sails down an inflatable slide Monday during the school's Activity Day at Short Park. Above, sixth-grader Abbi Young enjoys some time with her hula hoops. At left, seventh-grader Katherine Spagnuolo is doused by a burst water balloon. The event, sponsored by the Loyalsock Middle School Parent Teacher Organization, also included games, a "moon bounce," or just hanging out.

## Dead Marine's father sues funeral protesters

GREENBELT, Md. (AP) — The father of a Marine whose funeral was picketed by anti-gay protesters from a fundamentalist Kansas church filed an invasion-of-privacy suit against the demonstrators Monday.

It is believed to be the first lawsuit brought by a serviceman's family against Westboro Baptist Church of Topeka, Kan., whose members routinely demonstrate at military funerals around the country.

Albert Snyder of York, Pa., the father of Lance Cpl. Matthew A. Snyder, is seeking unspecified damages. The younger Snyder, 20, died March 3 after an accident in the Anbar province of Iraq. He was buried in Westminster, Md.

"We think it's a case we can win because anyone's funeral is private," Albert Snyder's lawyer Sean Summers said. "You don't have a right to interrupt someone's private funeral."

After filing the suit, Snyder said at a news conference that he hoped a hefty judgment would leave the church members unable to afford travel for more protests.

"I want it to stop," he said of the protests. "I didn't know there were people in the world who did that."

Members of Westboro say the military deaths in Iraq are God's punishment for America's tolerance of gays. They typically



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Gabriel Phelps-Roper, 10, and his sister Grace Phelps-Roper, 13, both of Topeka, Kan., protest at the March 10 funeral of Marine Lance Cpl. Matthew A. Snyder at St. John Roman Catholic Church in Westminster, Md., in this file photo.

carry signs with slogans such as "God Hates Fags" and "Thank God for IEDs," a reference to the roadside bombs used by insurgents.

The church has inspired dozens of state laws banning funeral protests, including a Maryland law that did not go into effect

until after Snyder's memorial. Shirley Phelps-Roper, a spokeswoman for the small congregation, said it is the first time Westboro has been sued by a soldier's family.

"We were exercising our First Amendment rights," she said.



## 'Underutilized' mailboxes removed from city streets

By LAUREN McLANE  
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Curbside mail collection boxes and smaller post boxes around the city are disappearing, but it's not the work of vandals.

According to acting city Postmaster Robert Varano, the disappearing boxes are "underutilized."

"We have about 180 boxes in the city of Williamsport. We conducted density tests about two to three weeks ago, and determined that about 50 boxes in the city are underutilized," he said. "People prefer to use the mailboxes on their houses."

The post boxes are the smaller, rectangular blue boxes on posts, he said. In addition to being underutilized, some of

**"People prefer to use the mailboxes on their houses."**

Robert Varano,  
acting city postmaster

them are dangerous. "On the post boxes, the back rusts, and if small children hang on them, they could pull them down," he said. "That's not just here," he said. "Nationwide, they're all (See MAILBOXES, Page B-3)