



## Insurance Companies are Listed in Prenter Suit

July 23, 2009/CoalValleynews.com/ Residents in Prenter are still awaiting the promised waterline extension to wind its way into their homes.

In January, a waterline extension was promised to the community.

Additionally, Gov. Joe Manchin, on Jan. 14 awarded a \$1.5 million small cities block grant that would bring water to the area.

For almost two years the citizens in the rural community have issued complaints with local and regional officials regarding the quality of their water.

Photos of jet black, clogged water filters have run on the front page of this and other publications, and still the residents rely on bottled and barrel water or water they must haul from area churches and community centers.

Water by the gallon are lined up in rows on the countertops in the homes of some residents, such as Maria Lambert, a community spokesperson for the civil lawsuit filed by approximately 39 families in Prenter.

Currently, 39 insurance companies added their names as third-party defendants in the lawsuit.

There are 39 emergency motions for injunctive relief filed by residents in the heartland of coal country in the Prenter and Seth area of Boone County naming seven coal companies as responsible parties for the current water contamination.

Adding to the names of the coal companies listed in the motions – Massey Energy, Omar Mining, Independence Coal Co., Black Castle Coal Co., Peabody Energy Corp. and Pine Ridge Coal Co. – are 39 insurance companies who provide, or have provided insurance to these coal industry leaders through the years.

These 39 insurance companies as listed on the Civil Case Information Statement, are AIG Casualty Company f/k/a Birmingham Fire Insurance Company; AIU Insurance Company, Allianz Underwriters Insurance Company; Allstate Insurance Company as Successor in interest to Northbrook Excess and Surplus Company f/k/a Northbrook Insurance Company; American Empire Surplus Lines Insurance Company f/k/a Great American Surplus Lines Insurance Company; Century Indemnity Company as Successor to CCI Insurance Company, successor to

Insurance Company of North America; Certain Underwriters at Lloyd's, London and London Insurance Companies; CAN Insurance Companies; Continental Casualty Company.

Also listed are Employers Insurance of Wausau; Employers Mutual Casualty Company; Evanston Insurance Company; Everest Reinsurance Company p/k/a Prudential Reinsurance Company; Federal Insurance Company; The Continental Insurance Company as successor by Merger to Fidelity Casualty Company of New York; Fireman's Fund Insurance Company; First State Insurance Company; General Star Indemnity Company; Government Employees Insurance Company; Granite State Insurance Company; Hartford Accident and Indemnity Company; Insurance Company of the State of Pennsylvania; Lexington Insurance Company; Midstates Reinsurance Corporation.

Additionally, the Mt. McKinley Insurance Company p/k/a Gibraltar Casualty Company; National Union Insurance Company of Pittsburgh Pennsylvania; Navigators Insurance Company as successor in interest to New York Marine Managers, Inc.; New England Insurance Company; North Start Reinsurance Corporation; Old Republic Insurance Company; One Beacon Insurance Company; Royal Indemnity Company; St. Paul Fire and Marine Insurance Company; TIG Insurance Company as successor in interest to International Insurance Company; Travelers Casualty and Surety Company as successor in interest to AETNA Casualty and Surety Company; Zurich American Insurance Company successor in interest to Zurich Insurance Company all are listed as third-party defendants in the civil action lawsuit.

Following reports of violations of the Clean Water Act by the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection in February 2006, residents became concerned about the quality of the drinking and well water supplies.

Residents have provided the court with studies conducted by noted scientists at two universities in West Virginia – Marshall and Wheeling Jesuit.

According to the court documents, the findings of these studies indicate that the contaminants found in the water can lead to a number of health problems, including intestinal lesions, high blood pressure, kidney and liver damage, and gastrointestinal distress.

Boone County Circuit Court Judge Will Thompson will continue this drawn-out motion for temporary relief on July 23 at 1:30 p.m.

The residents are asking that the judge order the coal companies to provide an emergency supply of water within 24 hours, a temporary water supply within 72 hours, and a permanent water supply within 30 days, to all the residents of Prenter and Seth.

The Prenter community has obtained donations to purchase barrels to provide water to residents and West Virginia American Water has provided water to the residents from Amazing Grace Fellowship Church at a cost of 25 cents per 125 gallons.

Many residents are still relying on well water to bathe, clean and wash their clothing and dishes and will continue to do so until clean water is piped into their homes.

In April, when funding for the West Virginia American Company waterline extension was reportedly available, Prenter residents said they were holding their breaths to see ground breaking on the water project.

However, according to the Boone County Commission and County Administrator, Jim Gore, the money for the project is all set to move the project forward.

Bids for the water project have also moved forward and a ground breaking ceremony will most likely be held sometime before the middle of August, according to Gore.