

CENSUS: COUNTY POPULATION SHRINKS Local, A3

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ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Gen. Stanley McChrystal speaks to reporters May 10 at the White House.

Sources: General to quit

Obama criticizes war commander's judgment after comments to Rolling Stone.

BY ANNE GEARAN AND JENNIFER LOVEN
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama rebuked his Afghanistan war commander for “poor judgment” Tuesday and considered whether to fire him in the most extraordinary airing of military-civilian tensions since Harry Truman stripped Gen. Douglas MacArthur of his command a half-century ago.

Gen. Stanley McChrystal is prepared to submit his resignation at a meeting with Mr. Obama today at the White House, two military officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly.

Mr. Obama summoned Gen. McChrystal to explain disparaging comments about his commander in chief and Mr. Obama's top aides. The meeting was a last-ditch moment for the general once considered the war's brightest hope.

If not insubordination, the remarks in a forthcoming Rolling Stone magazine article were at least an indirect challenge to management of the war by its top military commander.

“I think it's clear that the article in which he and his team appeared showed a poor — showed poor judgment.”

Please see **GENERAL**, Page A8

INSIDE

France sent home; U.S. faces Algeria

France was sent home winless Tuesday, the laughingstock of the soccer world after being eliminated from the World Cup in the first round with a 2-1 loss to South Africa. Meanwhile, the Americans' performance against Algeria could propel them to the second round — or send the coach packing. Sports, **B1**

Good morning

Partly cloudy
HIGH: 88°
LOW: 68°
Weather, **B10**

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FUTURE MURKY



BUTCH COMEGYS / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



LAURA LEGERE / STAFF PHOTO

ABOVE: Virginia Smitsky of Mount Pleasant Twp. holds a bottle of dirty water she drew from her kitchen faucet in November. “This is what it looked like when DEP told us to drink it,” she said. **TOP:** The moon shines over a natural gas drilling rig in Dimock Twp., Susquehanna County.

Drilling sites offer lessons for NEPA

BY LAURA LEGERE
STAFF WRITER

MOUNT PLEASANT

Most of the industrial accessories used to get Marcellus Shale natural gas to market — large water storage pits, tanks to hold gas byproducts, compressor stations, gas processing plants, pipelines, access roads, pumps to infuse the gas with its distinctive odor — have been built within 500 yards of the Hollowich family's new yellow house in the country.

Stephanie Hollowich, a 38-year-old mother of two, stood on the top of a steep rise at a Washington County Bible camp in January and pointed out her house below in the heart of rolling hills, bordered on one side by a shelterbelt and on another by a gravel road traveled by 18-wheel trucks at all hours of the day.

“This is what comes with it,” said Ron Gulla, a

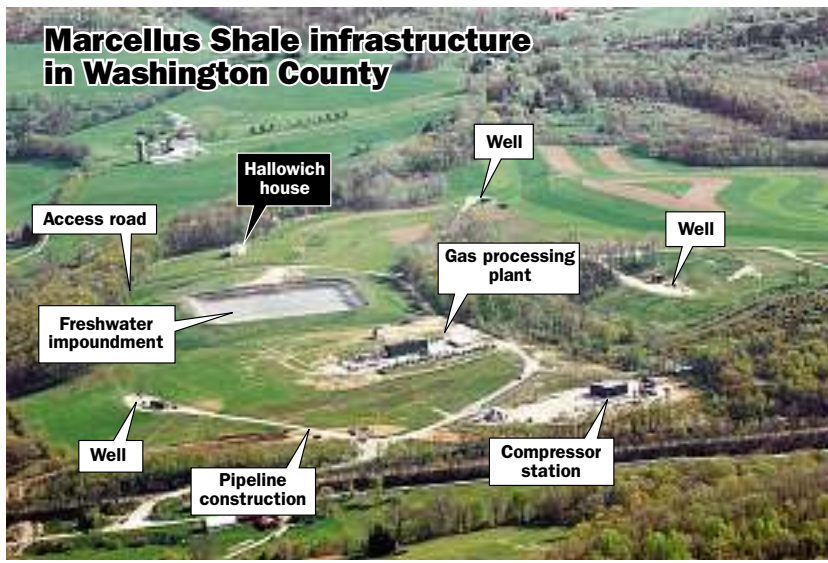


PHOTO COURTESY OF MARCELLUS-SHALE.US

Mount Pleasant resident who has been an outspoken critic of the industry. “People don't understand: the more wells they drill, the more compressors they need. Everything gets bigger. Everything you see there will grow in time.”

The story that Mrs. Hollowich said she heard

Continued on Page A6

TODAY
Drilling pumping cash into local economy, businesses. **A7**
Local business leaders discuss impact of drilling. Business, **D1**

ONLINE
For a searchable database of leases in Lackawanna and Luzerne counties, a DEP violations database, and past stories, visit: thetimes-tribune.com/gas

White House, judge facing off over Gulf drilling moratorium

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW ORLEANS — A federal judge struck down the Obama administration's six-month ban on deep water oil drilling in the Gulf of Mexico as rash and heavy-handed Tuesday, saying the government simply assumed that because one rig exploded, the others pose an imminent danger, too.

The White House promised an immediate appeal. Interior Secretary Ken Salazar said in a statement that within the next few days he will issue a new order imposing a moratorium that will eliminate any doubt it is needed and appropriate.

The Interior Department had imposed the moratorium last month in the wake of the BP disaster, halting approval of any new permits

for deep water projects and suspending drilling on 33 exploratory wells.

Several companies that ferry people and supplies and provide other services to offshore rigs argued that the moratorium was arbitrarily imposed after the April 20 explosion that killed 11 workers and blew out a well 5,000 feet underwater. It has spewed

anywhere from 67 million to 127 million gallons of oil.

U.S. District Judge Martin Feldman, who was appointed by President Ronald Reagan and has owned stock in a number of petroleum-related companies, sided with the plaintiffs. Judge Feldman's ruling prohibits federal officials from enforcing the moratorium until a trial is held.

On Tuesday

- BP claims director Darryl Willis visited a claims center in Bayou La Batre, Ala., and said the company has already cut 37,000 checks for \$118 million. Claims totaling \$600 million have been filed so far. **A5**
- Adm. Thad W. Allen of the Coast Guard said Tuesday the federal government and BP were looking into whether pipelines could be extended from the leaking well to platforms elsewhere in the Gulf where oil could be captured. **A5**
- U.S. Rep. Chris Carney visits the Gulf, plans special hearing of his Homeland Security subcommittee. **A5**
- Editorial: Lifting moratorium a leap of faith. **A10**

Sexting dispute settled

Wyoming County to pay \$140G to ACLU over fees.

BY MICHAEL J. RUDOLF
STAFF WRITER

TUNKHANNOCK — The Wyoming County commissioners agreed Tuesday to a \$140,000 settlement with the American Civil Liberties Union over legal fees the organization incurred in a sexting case, county solicitor James Davis confirmed.

The dispute over legal fees began after the commissioners' decision in April not to appeal a March U.S. Circuit Court ruling that blocked felony charges against a teenage girl for possessing what then-District Attorney George Skumanick Jr. claimed was a sexually explicit photograph of herself on her cell phone.

“None of us are real happy over this,” Mr. Davis said.

Because the ACLU was the prevailing party in a civil

Please see **SEXTING**, Page A8

Mellow Senate records sought

BY BORYS KRAWCZENIUK, ROBERT SWIFT AND JOE McDONALD
STAFF WRITERS

Federal investigators have asked the state Senate to turn over documents and financial records related to the retirement of retiring Senate Democratic Leader Robert J. Mellow's Peckville office, Senate sources said Tuesday.



MELLOW

The specifics of the request could not be confirmed, and Senate Clerk W. Russell Faber refused to discuss it.

The sources, who agreed to speak only if they were not identified because of the sensitivity of the investigation, said the Senate has either complied with the request or will comply soon.

The sources spoke four days after FBI and Internal Revenue Service agents raided Mr. Mellow's Senate office

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