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Make a donation today to support Plains Justice's positive message that comprehensive energy efficiency reforms can create real change by protecting low-income families and decreasing greenhouse gas emissions.

PLAINS JUSTICE CLEAN ENERGY AMBASSADOR PROGRAM PICKS UP STEAM

EXPERIENCED UTILITY EXEC SHOWS SMALL UTILITIES HOW TO CUT FOSSIL FUELS, LOWER BILLS

This spring, something new and exciting is happening at Plains Justice that will impact our whole region. Thanks to grant funding from the Leighty Foundation and Energy Foundation, Glenn Cannon of Waverly, Iowa, is taking on the role of Clean Energy Ambassador to rural electric cooperatives (RECs) and municipal utilities in the upper Midwest. Until January, Glenn was General Manager of Waverly Light and Power, where he made **impressive strides in lowering customer bills by improving efficiency** across the system.

Starting this summer, Glenn will take this successful business model to RECs, municipal utilities, and regulators in several states. Armed with new Department of Energy analysis about cost-effective efficiency potential, Glenn will show managers how to **trim the fat, lower customer bills, and reduce demand for fossil fuel energy.**

THE SMALL UTILITY CHALLENGE

State regulators often have no power to require energy efficiency gains from small utilities, and the result has been paltry gains in efficiency. **Some of the biggest supporters of new coal plant proposals are small RECs and municipal utilities.** These utilities want the most risk-averse approach to providing power to their customers, but their cost analysis often neglects the likely impact of carbon regulation on the price of coal-fired power. Or small utilities sometimes assume that they will continue to be exempted from regulation. A smarter approach would be increased spending on energy efficiency, which **provides needed power at a lower cost to each consumer, less risk, and lighter environmental impacts.** Our Clean Energy Ambassador will work with small utilities to help them make a cost-effective change.

PLAINS JUSTICE'S WORK

Plains Justice has successfully funded the program and we're delighted that a clean energy leader like Glenn will bring solid data and experience to the challenge. We will provide communications and administrative support, with the goal of making our Clean Energy Ambassador program self-supporting.



Glenn Cannon, recently retired as General Manager of Waverly Light & Power in Waverly, Iowa, will reach out to small utilities across the Upper Midwest to share the energy efficiency success story that lowered his customers' bills and fossil fuel use.

In a moment of decision the best thing you can do is the right thing. The worst thing you can do is nothing.

President Theodore Roosevelt

Protecting Theodore Roosevelt National Park

Several proposals over the last few years have threatened not just air quality but water quality and quantity around Theodore Roosevelt National Park in southwestern North Dakota. A newly formed offshoot of Dakota Resource Council, Badlands Area Resource Council, has formed to demand clear answers about one new proposal in particular. Great Northern Power Development proposes a 500 megawatt coal gasification plant and adjoining lignite mine at South Heart,

ND, fifteen miles from the Park. Developers acknowledge that the plume, and possibly the smokestacks, will be visible from the Park.

Locals like Mary Hodell, pictured at left, are asking where the water will come from for this operation. They'd like to know more about the technology proposed, how the mining will affect local wells, and who will be responsible if things go wrong. Those whose livelihoods depend on tourism are concerned that the plant will

be the first thing visitors to the Park see.

Skepticism about GNPD's sunny claims grows with every public meeting that fails to answer the most basic questions about emissions and land impacts. (continued on p.3)

"Developers acknowledge that the plume, and possibly the smokestacks, will be visible from the Park."

Livestock Confinements: What a time to be a pig



Local Mary Hodell presses developers for answers at a January 2008 public meeting about plans for a mine and coal gasification plant at South Heart, ND, 15 miles from Theodore Roosevelt National Park, near Mary's family ranch. (Photo: Carrie La Seur)

Midwesterners have long been aware that hogs, cattle and chickens aren't raised the way our grandparents raised them anymore. Raising large numbers of livestock today is a science, requiring specially designed barns, carefully calibrated monitoring and feeding, medication, security, and waste management.

This winter, a Linn County farmer was kind enough to take Plains Justice attorney Carrie La Seur on a tour of his 1300 head hog confinement and talk over why confinements can be so controversial. It's a delicate conversation for an environmental lawyer and a hog farmer to have, but necessary. The only way to develop farm policy that's protective of water quality, rural quality of life, and the agricultural economy is to have more, not

fewer, honest conversations about how we can all live together in a changing world.

Plains Justice is wading into these murky waters (if you'll pardon the phrase) by representing Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement and Washington D.C.'s Environmental Integrity Project, two organizations passionately devoted to improving water quality and protecting rural quality of life against ag pollution.

In a series of meetings with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, we've identified common ground on improving regulations, public involvement, monitoring and enforcement. Statutory changes bringing Iowa confinements in line with the Clean Water Act are moving successfully through the

legislature without opposition from beef or pork producers.

Insider expertise is helping us add diplomacy to our advocacy. J. Edward Brown, formerly IDNR's water quality head of enforcement, is consulting with Plains Justice on this project. Jim's knowledge of the players and the process has helped get cooperation and movement from parties that have often been at odds.

During the rest of 2008, we'll be working through remaining problems with Iowa's regulations. Iowa has not yet issued any Clean Water Act discharge permits to confinements, but we know that discharges take place regularly, with serious environmental impacts. The push for reform—and our commitment to conversation and diplomacy—must continue.

National Park, continued

On January 24, Plains Justice President Carrie La Seur spoke at a meeting of Badlands Area Resource Council about what steps are necessary to permit a mine and coal plant and took questions from locals about their options.

Bismarck attorney Derrick Braaten of the Sarah Vogel Law Firm is also working with Plains Justice, Dakota Resource Council and local advocates to ensure that procedural protections are observed and everyone's questions are an-

swered before any final agency action takes place.

The South Heart plant and mine would be sited about thirty miles from another proposed 500 megawatt coal plant at Gascoyne, ND. The Gascoyne proposal is the subject of an "adverse impact" finding from the National Park Service.

NPS found that emissions from the Gascoyne plant would damage visibility in the National Park, "diminish the

national significance of Theodore Roosevelt NP and potentially impair the quality of the visitor experience to that area."

The words of Teddy Roosevelt himself seem appropriate: "In a moment of decision the best thing you can do is the right thing. The worst thing you can do is nothing." We are proud to work beside North Dakotans who are putting themselves on the line to do the right thing, for their land, for a cherished national treasure, and for future generations.



Painted Canyon, TRNP (Photo: Carrie La Seur)

Coal Combustion Waste Advocacy and Education

Thanks to the generosity of the Carolyn Foundation, Plains Justice is following up on its 2007 Iowa Coal Combustion Waste Disposal Report with an advocacy and education campaign.

Key concerns identified in the Report are that Iowa is importing coal combustion waste or "CCW" from as far away as Indiana, probably because Iowa's regulations for CCW disposal are relatively weak, and that groundwater is at risk. Federal regulations ordered by Congress in 1980 are still languishing in the bureaucratic process due to heavy opposition by industry.

CCW contains high levels of the heavy metals present in coal, including arsenic, beryllium, thallium and selenium. If improperly handled, CCW can leach into groundwater and

filter to surface water or drinking water. Health impacts include nervous system and developmental effects generally associated with excessive exposure to heavy metals.

Iowa's regulation of this waste stream has improved in recent years, but still has a way to go. One matter of immediate concern is the filling of abandoned quarries with CCW in a practice termed "beneficial use", apparently referring to reclamation of quarry pits by filling them with CCW.

Unfortunately, current Iowa regulations allow quarry filling to take place without liners, groundwater monitoring, or financial assurances in case of contamination. States that do monitor, like Wisconsin, have documented many cases of proven contamination. Significant health risks and clean-up

expense have resulted at some sites, such as Anne Arundel County, Maryland, where contamination made well water undrinkable.

Plains Justice is working with Iowa DNR and other stakeholders to determine what changes are necessary in Iowa's regulations to provide full protection for our water and ensure that Iowa is not a destination for this toxic waste stream. We are also concerned that the Waterloo coal plant proposal includes disposal of CCW in Waterloo South Quarry and are working to prevent that.

The Executive Summary of the Plains Justice report is available on our website at:

<http://plainsjustice.org/coal-combustion-waste-report/>

The full report is available upon request.



Plains Justice Board Chair Dianne Dillon-Ridgley recently participated in a meeting of the Congressional Black Caucus on the impacts of climate change on African-Americans. See the Caucus' report at:

http://www.cbcfinc.org/pdf/AAclim_chg_final.pdf

Iowa Environmental Caucuses Green Up 2008 Party Platforms

Thanks to the generosity of the Joyce Foundation, Plains Justice organizer Jane I. Duax of Davenport has spent the last several months criss-crossing Iowa to hold non-partisan environmental caucuses in more than a dozen cities. From Jane's careful notes of all comments, Plains Justice has drafted 2008 Environmental Platform Planks, available online at:

[http://plainsjustice.org/files/
PJ_Final_2008_Envtl_Planks.pdf](http://plainsjustice.org/files/PJ_Final_2008_Envtl_Planks.pdf)

What are Iowans' key environmental concerns? Major categories are energy, air and global warming; water quality; 'reduce, reuse, recycle'; land use and planning; and campaign finance reform (yes, nearly everyone agreed that this is an environmental issue). County platforms around the state now reflect expanded, nuanced environmental, energy and agriculture planks based on input from the environmental caucuses. It's been a great exercise in true democracy.

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So that every voice is heard when decisions are made about our air, our water, our land, and our lives.

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