DEQ to resume testing; evacuation continues

Tuesday, April 20, 2010
Representatives from the DEQ will continue monitoring water wells today insouth Caddo Parish. Some areas where natural gas was detected in water wells will be retested, and new areas will also be tested.

In the meantime, the evacuation of about 135 families in the area will remain in effect. Residents will be allowed home for brief periods today to gather additional clothing and needed supplies. Residents are encouraged to gather any needed items during daylight hours.

Evacuated residents with pets can board their animals at local kennels, save their receipts, and be reimbursed by Exco Operating Company.

"We're not ready to say your home is safe," said Sheriff Steve Prator. "Testing will continue today, and another assessment on the status of evacuations will be made in the morning."

For those families that remained in their homes, the DEQ cautioned against using well water for any reason. They also said to avoid smoking and open flames in the affected area.

Officials also announced today that "flaring" the well site has begun and is expected to produce flares up to 75 feet in height. This is a normal activity, officials said.

Exco officials will meet with evacuated residents at 6 p.m. tonight at the Comfort Inn, 6:45 p.m. at the Clarion, and 8 p.m. at the Hilton.

In the meantime, the information hotline established by the Shreveport Fire Department remains open. That number is 675-2255.

All currently announced road closures remain in effect.