

LETTERS

Plant doesn't belong in Barkeyville park

Editor:

I attended the Department of Environmental Protection's public hearing in Barkeyville. Although the citizens had requested a public hearing about air pollution related to the proposed Hawbaker asphalt plant, a lot of the 3½-hour time period was used up by business people from outside Barkeyville promoting Hawbaker and the Oil Region Alliance

Hawbaker presented a slide show that made their proposed facility look like Disneyland — Mom, Apple Pie and Asphalt.

We were told the facility would burn 25-30 tons of high-sulfur coal daily but would produce emissions equivalent to two household fireplaces or two bakeries. Many in the audience found these simplistic exaggerations misleading about the pollution.

The Oil Region Alliance's repetitive mantra is "60-80 new jobs" and that anyone who is against the plant is against jobs. But Hawbaker admits there will be only seven jobs at the site, probably all transferred from their Grove City facility. Paving and trucking jobs will be seasonal and filled by their existing employees

or people hired from anywhere in Pennsylvania.

Barkeyville loses 27 acres of its industrial park, receives no property taxes for several years, has to subsidize Hawbaker by maintaining the roads, gets virtually no jobs out of the deal and has to breathe Hawbaker's pollution emissions. The ORA insists we should stop complaining and be grateful that our children may be lucky enough to work at a local asphalt plant. This argument is ridiculous.

Our children decide their future by their own aspirations. But if we don't want them to move away, we must do whatever we can to keep the Barkeyville area a pleasant place to live, not pollute it with toxic emissions.

Nobody is complaining about Team Hardinger, a new business — 26 employees, 40 acres and no need for a DEP pollution permit. But the Hawbaker facility does not belong in Barkeyville and the sooner the ORA realizes this fact, the sooner we will be able to get this problem solved.

— Jeanine Jenkins
Grove City