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ENERGY
GAS AND OIL
GEOLOGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES
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Over \$9 Million in Coalbed Methane Royalties Disbursed to Natural Gas Owners

Lebanon, Va.- The Virginia Gas and Oil Board approved disbursements for \$9,179,136.24 since July 2015. In this fiscal year, payments totaling \$2,200,879 have been made to natural gas owners, already totaling more than any other year since the Virginia Gas and Oil Board was formed. The Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy's (DMME) Division of Gas and Oil, which serves as staff to the Board, processes the payments.

Since House Bill 2058 went into effect in July 2015, the Virginia Gas and Oil Board continues to break records on disbursement amounts. The new law gave gas owners the right to coalbed methane royalties if there was not a previous legal ruling or existing agreement between coal and gas owners. Coalbed methane is a gas contained in a coal seam. Previously there were disputes over whether the person with the gas or coal rights to property where gas is produced was due the royalties.

"I am extremely proud of the efficiency of DMME's effort in working with the natural gas companies to get this money out of escrow," said Virginia Gas and Oil Board Chairman Butch Lambert. "We expect most of the gas companies in Virginia to no longer use the escrow account for royalties by 2018."

The escrow account will remain open. Currently there are gas owners that can't be located or are unknown due to very large heirships. In addition, over \$20,000 in uncashed checks remain in the account. That list is posted on DMME's [website](#) for residents to search whether they've received a check and for how much. That money will be escheated to the Virginia Department of Treasury if the checks are not cashed in three years.

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A W-9 tax form is required to be submitted to the natural gas company before the bank will write a check. The company will send those due royalties the tax form and notification that it is asking the Virginia Gas and Oil Board for approval to disburse the money. The tax form can also be found on DMME's [website](#).

Citizens can search DMME's [website](#) under the Virginia Gas and Oil Board's E-Form Center to see if they might be due royalties. There are over 8,000 producing natural gas wells in Virginia. Around 6,000 of those are coalbed methane wells.

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