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Abita Springs mayor tours Helis oil-drilling operation in St. Tammany Parish

By Heath Sanchez

ABITA SPRINGS, La. — Abita Springs Mayor Greg Lemons participated in a flyover Monday morning of the Helis Oil & Gas drilling operation in St. Tammany Parish.

Watch report

Lemons was joined on the flyover by Scott Eustis of the Gulf Restoration Network. The two observed the drilling operation in the wetlands area just southeast of Abita Springs. The flight was accomplished through SouthWings, a nonprofit conservation organization.

According to its website, SouthWings advocates for the restoration and protection of ecosystems and biodiversity of the Southeast through flight. The organization conducts flyovers to help educate community leaders, policymakers and the media.

*The response to SouthWings flights has been overwhelming. Among...
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Chamber of Commerce earlier this week. The town's mayor is at odds with the chamber over what he calls the chamber's apparent support of fracking. And now some members of Abita's town council say they had no idea the mayor was about to pull the plug.

DRILLING PERMIT FOR HELIS OIL APPROVED FOR FRACKING...

A drilling permit has been approved for Helis Oil & Gas Co. for a proposed fracking operation in St. Tammany Parish.

HELIS OFFERS COMPROMISE FOR ST. TAMMANY PARISH FRACKING...

St. Tammany Parish leaders announced that after a meeting to discuss the proposed fracking project by Helis Oil & Gas, the company offered to alter its original plan.

FIGHT CONTINUES TO STOP FRACKING IN ST. TAMMANY PARISH

Concerned Citizens of St. Tammany filed motions in court Friday afternoon in Baton Rouge as a fight to stop an oil-drilling and fracking project proposed for St. Tammany Parish continues.

A few days after the ruling, the Concerned Citizens of St. Tammany filed motions in court in Baton Rouge to stop the oil-drilling and fracking project. CCST leaders have filed appeals and arguments against the judge’s rulings. They said they plan to keep climbing the judicial ladder whether they win or lose.

“We believe in the end we can still win this,” RickFranzo of CCST said. “We believe the constitutional rights of the citizens are being violated.”

READ: Fight continues to stop fracking in St. Tammany Parish

In a statement before Monday’s flight, Lemons said: “Even though we’ve hit some setbacks, it’s made us even stronger. We’ll protect what makes St. Tammany special: clean air and clean water.”

According a report from The Advocate, Helis officials said the first stage of the oil well project could begin in mid-August.

many of its educational benefits is the effective media tool to education millions of citizens nationwide,” the organization says on its website.

READ: Helis Oil & Gas gets approval by Army Corps of Engineers for exploratory well in St. Tammany Parish

The nonprofit on Monday took Lemons and Eustis over the drilling operation in St. Tammany Parish that was approved in June by the Army Corps of Engineers. Helis will be allowed to drill an exploratory well on a 3.2-acre site and will be placing air monitoring, noise monitoring and groundwater monitoring systems.

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