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Date: 09-21-11

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –

Local Officials Determine Cause of Tuesday's Gas Odor in Rustburg

RUSTBURG, VA – Local officials have determined the source of the gas odor that resulted in the closing of Rustburg High School on Tuesday morning, September 20.

A gas truck passing through Campbell County transported a supply of the concentrated gas, ethyl mercaptan, creating a "rotten eggs" smell. As natural gas is colorless and odorless, suppliers often add this chemical as a safety precaution to natural gas lines to make detection of gas leaks possible. In its concentrated form, ethyl mercaptan takes only a few parts per million to create odor in natural gas, which is why it is ideal and valuable as a safety agent to alert individuals to potentially hazardous leaks.

This odor resulted in local officials taking safety precautions associated with gas leaks. Due to the geographical layout of the area, combined with weather conditions, the ethyl mercaptan lingered at lower levels making the smell more pronounced. There was no danger to the general public; classes resumed at Rustburg High School on Wednesday.

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