



# THE TIPRO TARGET



**Texas  
Independent  
Producers and  
Royalty Owners  
Association**

## At TIPRO conference, Oxy CEO encourages industry operators to accelerate innovations to avoid more stringent regulatory measures

Speaking to the members of the Texas Independent Producers & Royalty Owners Association (TIPRO) at the organization's 75<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention, Vicki Hollub, chief executive officer and president of Occidental Petroleum Corporation, last week said the nation's energy industry needs to get ahead of shifting regulatory and policy changes being pushed out of Washington D.C., and be proactive, in order to help the sector avoid more stringent and punishing regulatory measures. "Our industry needs to get ahead of the curve," she said at the TIPRO meeting, held virtually on Tuesday, April 6. "The industry has some ability to get ahead of and continue to try to do things we as an industry do so well -- innovate around technologies that help us to continue to lower emissions," explained Hollub in a discussion of how industry players may stem concerns over more severe government rules anticipated by the new president. "I think in the absence of a good plan on how to continue to lower emissions from the existing production that we have in the U.S., President Biden and his administration are going to feel forced to do something on their own, which could involve limiting leasing on federal lands," stated Hollub. "So, if we can get ahead on some of the regulations, some of our practices, and on CCUS (carbon capture, utilization and storage), I think that we give the president and his administration some options. But we have to give them options, because it is their goal to lower emissions in the U.S., and if we can help do that then we won't have to deal with some extreme measures they may have to take."

As part of her conversation with TIPRO, Hollub also praised OPEC's energy minister from Saudi Arabia for doing an incredible job in bringing the world's oil industry back in balance after the oil crisis last year and extreme market volatility energy producers faced in 2020. "We do believe that what they are doing is working well," she affirmed. Referencing OPEC's strategy to limit production output in check with energy demand levels, Hollub said they were "brilliant" in how they handled their approach, adding that every U.S. oil and gas company ought to appreciate their efforts.

Oxy's chief executive did caution during her remarks at TIPRO's Convention that the U.S. oil and gas industry will still need to be very careful in its recovery moving forward. "For example, we are not going in 2021 to have the same level of production as we had in 2020," Hollub reported in regard to her company's planned output this coming year. "It's really important that we all recognize that we have to be conscious of the supply and demand of our industry... which will be the only way for us to have some certainty in our ability to operate," she said.

SEE MORE COVERAGE OF  
TIPRO'S ANNUAL CONVENTION  
ON PAGE 4 OF  
THIS NEWSLETTER!



SPECIAL THANKS TO THE SPONSORS OF TIPRO'S

## 75<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CONVENTION A VIRTUAL INDUSTRY SUMMIT



## Chairman's message

TIPRO Members,

A week ago, many of you took the opportunity and time out of your busy schedules to join TIPRO for our Annual Convention, hosted in a virtual format online. I have to admit that those who were unable to attend missed some excellent presentations from TIPRO's distinguished panel of speakers. Various aspects and comments from the association's conference have since found their way into articles featured in mainstream publications including *Bloomberg*, *Reuters*, *World Oil*, *E&P Plus*, *Upstream Online* and the *Midland Reporter-Telegram*, to name a few. To me, this suggests that the people and content the TIPRO staff were able to assemble to headline this conference were insightful, topical and timely. This was mixed in with some good old-fashioned storytelling that made most of us wish we could get on Vicki Hollub's plus one list for dinners in Oman. Thank you again to those who were able to join us for the presentations and for those of you who stepped up to sponsor and make this industry meeting possible. Just as importantly, I want to thank the staff at TIPRO who put together a wonderful slate of presentations for us all to enjoy! Hopefully this will be our last virtual conference but more on that later.

What a difference 365 days make! Even with the headwinds coming out of Washington and efforts to disguise the Green New Deal policies as an infrastructure plan, conditions for our industry are taking a positive turn and showing signs of recovery. Projections done by many analysts suggest that the world's need for dispatchable energy (energy that has ability to match demand) will grow. The combination of domestic production declines (keep in mind 25 percent of our domestic production comes from federal lands and impacts from the leasing moratorium have not been seen yet but will) along with the production quotas enacted by OPEC + are finally making a dent on the oil storage overhang. As demand increases coming out of the pandemic, we should see the market start to balance on the oil side. On the natural gas side, meanwhile, we are exporting over 10 billion cubic feet of gas per day (BCFGD) from our liquefied natural gas (LNG) facilities. This has made a significant impact in the storage numbers with some excellent winter draws (that would have been 150 BCF if we could have delivered the gas needed during the freeze), pushing total storage to just below the 5-year average.

The industry otherwise is responding to what appears to be a more stable market with increased activity. The number of permits (drilling, workover, injection, etc.) granted by the Railroad Commission is back up to levels recorded in March of 2020 – before the pandemic hit. With expanding drilling in our oilfields, the service industry -- that's always hit the hardest during downturns -- will be in catch up mode from both a personnel and equipment perspective (what fun it is to work in a cyclical industry). All this bodes well for some recovery in 2021. Hopefully the downturn consolidation of the industry and Wall Street's desire for returns instead of growth will prevent the resource treadmill from flooding the market and starting the cycle again. Here is to smoother cycles going forward!

Last April, coming off our cancelled 2020 Annual Convention that was supposed to take place in Dallas, then Chairman Eugene Garcia was asking members to clear their respective calendars for the TIPRO Summer Conference that had been scheduled to be held in San Antonio. Needless to say that meeting was later transformed in the Fall to our first virtual conference and we have tried over the past year to learn from that experience and utilize virtual platforms in the best ways possible to bring together the members of TIPRO. As of today, I am now asking you to mark your calendars for our 2021 Summer Conference we are planning for this September, and god willing it will be in person. Kind regards,

Brent Hopkins



**Brent Hopkins**

## TIPRO joins government officials for inaugural Texas-Mexico Business Leadership Forum

The Texas Independent Producers & Royalty Owners Association (TIPRO), along with the Texas Oil & Gas Association (TXOGA) participated in the inaugural Texas-Mexico Business Leadership Forum earlier this week that was joined by more than 100 representatives from the U.S. and Mexico. Mexico is the largest trading partner for Texas, and the value of energy trade specifically between both regions is approximately tens of billions dollars annually, making an event like this all the more meaningful and important. Opportunities to sell Texas-made oil and natural gas to Mexico are particularly attractive given the proximity and geographical location of both trading partners, which has and will continue to offer a competitive advantage to Texas energy producers.

At the Texas-Mexico Business Leadership Forum, hosted virtually on Tuesday, April 13, a key area of the focus was how the private sectors of Mexico and Texas can strengthen the bilateral economic relationship through business opportunities and joint policy recommendations aimed to enhance the region's competitiveness. TIPRO's President Ed Longanecker offered recommendations at the event on providing consistent communication and messaging to federal and state leaders collaborating with engaged companies and organizations. Other government officials presenting at Tuesday's forum and reviewing the important relationship between Texas and Mexico included Texas Secretary of State Ruth Hughs, Texas State Comptroller of Public Accounts Glenn Hegar and Mexico's Economy Minister Tatiana Clouthier.

### TIPRO CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**APRIL 19, 2021**

CONFERENCE CALL — TIPRO  
State Issues Committee meeting.  
For information, please email  
[rpaylor@tipro.org](mailto:rpaylor@tipro.org).

**APRIL 26, 2021**

CONFERENCE CALL — TIPRO  
State Issues Committee meeting.  
For information, please email  
[rpaylor@tipro.org](mailto:rpaylor@tipro.org).

**MAY 3, 2021**

CONFERENCE CALL — TIPRO  
State Issues Committee meeting.  
For information, please email  
[rpaylor@tipro.org](mailto:rpaylor@tipro.org).

## Remembering Rex White, Jr., loyal TIPRO member and past association leader

With deep sadness, the Texas Independent Producers & Royalty Owners Association (TIPRO) mourns the recent passing of Rex H. White Jr., who died peacefully on April 4, 2021, surrounded by his loving family. Throughout the duration of his career, White was passionate about the oil and gas industry, and took great pride in his service to Texas' independent oilmen, including the many years he spent supporting independents and landowners as a leader of TIPRO. He will be greatly missed.

Born in Houston on September 27, 1932, White lived a fulfilling life with three great passions: his family, his church and his profession. He earned a Bachelor of Science and Masters in Geology from the University of Texas at Austin (UT) in 1960.



Rex White with the other members of TIPRO's Board (2015)

After spending several years working as a petroleum geologist-geophysicist for Mobil Oil Corporation in the 1960s, he then returned to Austin to earn a law degree from UT, graduating in 1967 and embarking upon a 53-year legal career focused on oil and gas.

Following his graduation from law school, White worked at the Texas Attorney General's office and would go on to later serve as a special counsel to the Railroad Commission of Texas. He then became a partner of several prestigious law firms across Austin before starting his own practice in 1998, where he was an attorney and counselor at law, as well as mediator of oil and gas matters.

White was involved with several organizations throughout his career, and a very involved member of TIPRO. He joined the association in 1979, and throughout his membership as an Explorer, was part of various committees, including the TIPRO Executive Committee, the State Issues Committee and an advisor to the association's Legal Committee. White was also a dedicated leader on the TIPRO Board of Directors, and served as the chairman of TIPRO from 1994-1997. Most recently he was serving in the position of 'Chairman Emeritus' on TIPRO's Board, an advisory role available only to past leaders of the association.

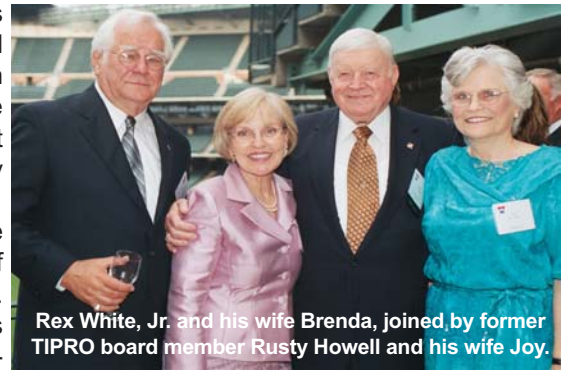


Rex White with industry colleagues and TIPRO members at the association's 2006 Summer policy meeting.

In 2000, White was recipient of the Mr. TIPRO Award, the association's highest honor, for his meaningful contributions to TIPRO and the oil and gas industry.

In addition to his participation with TIPRO's board, White also served on the Saratoga Resources, Inc., board. He was a member of the Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commission and the Oil Field Clean Up Advisory Committee.

White is survived by his devoted wife, Brenda; sons and daughters-in-law Rex III and Terri White; Eric and Mary Polnau; and eight grandchildren. A memorial service is planned for later this month in remembrance of White. In lieu of flowers, the family wishes for memorial donations to instead be made to St. Mark's Episcopal Church (2128 Barton Hills Drive, Austin, Texas 78704) or Hospice Austin (4107 Spicewood Springs Road, Austin, Texas 78759).



Rex White, Jr. and his wife Brenda, joined by former TIPRO board member Rusty Howell and his wife Joy.



Cindy Abel with Rex White and wife Brenda at the 2014 TIPRO Summer Conference

## Land commissioner participates in roundtable discussion with oil & gas leaders in West Texas

Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush earlier this month was in the Permian Basin to meet with oil and gas professionals and hear directly from energy workers about the industry's recovery from the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic as well as discuss potential implications from actions by the federal government that have affected the Texas oil and gas industry. The commissioner's visit with industry leaders was hosted and coordinated by the Energy Workforce & Technology Council.

"Oil and gas is the lifeblood of the Texas economy and changes to these industries can have wide-reaching impacts on every community across the state," Commissioner Bush said. "As demand for energy increases and technology advances, it is important to discuss with these industry leaders on how we can proactively position Texas to secure a robust energy future for generations to come."

During the industry roundtable, Commissioner Bush described his efforts to defend the industry through the creation of the Land Office's Texas Defense Task Force, launched in February 2021 to preserve Texas energy independence. The mission of the task force is to identify federal overreach and fend off threats to the Texas oil and gas economy, following Governor Abbott's executive order for state agencies to prepare to protect Texas' energy industry in the years ahead.

Commissioner Bush also spoke of apprehensions about the president's energy policies in an interview with "Fox & Friends" co-host Brian Kilmeade, who accompanied the land commissioner during his recent trip to West Texas. Commissioner Bush told Kilmeade that President Biden's energy policies sent a "very dangerous message" to Texas. He expressed concern over threats of federal overreach from Washington, D.C., including broad policies that he warned could impact the way Texas runs its economy. TIPRO members can watch the land commissioner's interview discussing the impact of President Biden's agenda on the Texas energy sector at:

<https://bit.ly/3a88D6A>.

## House speaker tells TIPRO he's always mindful of energy's importance to Texas

At the Texas Independent Producers & Royalty Owners Association (TIPRO) 75<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention last week, Texas' Speaker of the House of Representatives Dade Phelan paid homage to Texas' oil and gas industry by recognizing its many contributions, citing jobs the industry supports along with tax-generated revenue from E&P activities used to fund local, county and state coffers. Having grown up in Southeast Texas and currently serving his fourth term in the Texas Legislature representing his home district near Beaumont along the Texas coast, Speaker Phelan expressed to TIPRO how much he appreciates "that wonderful black stuff" (referencing crude oil) that is processed in his neck of the woods by some of the country's largest petrochemical refineries. "It's very important to my constituents. It's how they put food on the table, it's how they pay for their homes and their cars. I'm very protective of that segment of the industry because it's so important to my area," said Speaker Phelan.

Phelan, the leading officer of the Texas House, in his remarks at the TIPRO event also talked with the association about the legislature's top priorities this session, including passing a balanced budget as well as addressing infrastructure needs around Texas. And while the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic remains top of mind for many lawmakers and Texans, the speaker assured TIPRO's audience that despite circumstances, people are still showing up to the state capitol to push for reform on issues they care about most. He encouraged members of TIPRO and fellow industry representatives to never stop advocating on those policies that might impact their business' bottom line, explaining how members of the House often appreciate hearing from Texans on legislative proposals. "It's important to constantly communicate with us about what you like, what you don't like, what amendments may impact you," Speaker Phelan explained. "Keep fighting for the industry, keep meeting with your representatives. The industry impacts so much of what we do on a daily basis and the economy."

## As industry picks itself up from the downturn, companies must look to digital innovations for a boost

The oil and natural gas industry has a long-established history of innovating, but it is the transition to more effective technologies and optimized drilling equipment that will help Texas producers most in surviving the current environment in energy markets. That's the message relayed from Chad Peterson, managing director of Schlumberger North America U.S. land geounit, at TIPRO's 75<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention hosted by the association in early April. Peterson suggested to the members of TIPRO that digital technologies and other innovative solutions will be essential to lowering operating costs and making production more efficient.

After oil prices crashed in 2020 and many companies were forced to shut-in production, the oilfield services sector was hit particularly hard. Today, as the industry starts to see E&P activities pick back up, service companies will have to answer the call by providing top-tier service in order to keep customers happy, Peterson explained, and also must continue to develop new products that are more proficient and environmentally friendly.

Peterson also during the TIPRO conference advised service companies to embrace societal trends that promote sustainability and the environment, which in part has been driven by policies like the Paris Climate Accord. "When you get society behind an initiative, that's a force to be reckoned with," Peterson acknowledged, adding that the treaty had really educated the investor community about climate goals. "We need to embrace this - it's happening," he added. Amongst his company's efforts to build cutting-edge extraction technologies in an environmentally friendly manner, Schlumberger has in its portfolio more than 100 impact-reducing technologies, including zero-flaring green completions, biodegradable drilling muds, screen pulse, automated electric submersible pump gas handling systems and a portfolio of valves that prevent fugitive emissions. The company is also eyeing opportunities in carbon capture and storage, said Peterson.

## Port of Corpus Christi leader says U.S. will be world's top LNG seller by 2025

Looking past difficult economic conditions caused in the last year by the coronavirus pandemic and industry downturn, Port of Corpus Christi CEO Sean Strawbridge at TIPRO's 75<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention suggested brighter times may be ahead for global energy trade as economies around the world get back on track. While he called 2021 a "pause year" for trading activities due to associated market disruptions and the ongoing COVID-19 recovery, Strawbridge reported that officials at the port - the nation's second largest exporter of crude oil and a major gateway to international and domestic maritime commerce - felt the oil and gas industry and its associated export business would hit its stride again by 2024 or 2025. When that happens, Strawbridge indicated that crude exports from Texas would rise. In only a matter of years, the United States will also be the top seller of liquefied natural gas (LNG) by 2025, he projected. "There is a true foreign policy benefit to putting American hydrocarbons on the international market," Strawbridge affirmed.

## Citigroup forecasts robust growth for oil prices in 2021 at TIPRO convention

Upstream producers and members of TIPRO were happy to learn that Brent prices are estimated to rise later this year, according to projections shared by Ed Morse, global head of commodities research at Citi, during a market forecast presented at the association's 2021 Annual Convention. Surging energy demands and greater oil consumption around the world will support higher oil prices by the second part of 2021, Morse told TIPRO, with Brent crude prices estimated to average \$69 per barrel this year. "We expect that we will have 5.5-6 percent GDP growth around the world this year, and that for the year as a whole, we will get back toward if not equal to 2019 levels. Particularly when we get to the third quarter, we think that the recovery globally is going to be so robust that gasoline and diesel demand will exceed by the middle of the third quarter what it was in 2019," said Morse.

A U.S. oil production recovery will take time, and might not fully happen until the second half of the year, Morse informed TIPRO's attendees, but activity will accelerate with higher prices, which analysts foresee happening by the third and fourth quarters of 2021. "The higher the price level, the higher production growth between the U.S. at the end of 2021 and 2025," he explained. "We need a rig rate to get up well above where the current rig rate is. We are seeing around 330 rigs deployed in oil directional drilling in the U.S. We've been seeing a lot added from the low point last summer when we had fewer than 170 rigs being deployed and are now seeing a lot more rigs coming back onto the market this year."

## EPA administrator shakes up membership of federal scientific advisory committees

After less than a month in office, the head of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced recently he was planning to reset the membership of several advisory committees relied upon by federal regulators for scientific expertise and other guidance on air quality standards and policies intended to protect public health and the environment. EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan made the decision at the end of March to remove more than 40 outside experts appointed under President Donald Trump from two key advisory panels, the EPA's Science Advisory Board (SAB) and the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC), as well as reorient the SAB standing committees.

"Scientific integrity is one of EPA's foundational values - and as administrator, I am committed to ensuring that every decision we make meets rigorous scientific standards," Administrator Regan said in a statement. "Resetting these two scientific advisory committees will ensure the agency receives the best possible scientific insight to support our work to protect human health and the environment. Today we return to a time-tested, fair, and transparent process for soliciting membership to these critically important advisory bodies." Federal leaders have made allegations that decisions made by past EPA administrators during the Trump Administration resulted in "irregularities" to the process of selecting scientific advisors and other members serving on the scientific panels. The EPA cites actions such as:

- An internal October 2017 directive that prevented qualified academics and non-government officials who received EPA research grants from concurrently serving on EPA advisory committees, significantly restricting member eligibility. (The portion of the directive pertaining to EPA grants was vacated and remanded in April 2020 by the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York);
- Eliminating key air pollution review panels that have augmented the CASAC for decades; and,
- Not following the standard process for appointing committee members, as noted in a July 2019 Government Accountability Office report on EPA Advisory Committees.

As a result of Administrator Regan's action, the EPA is now accepting new applications for the two panels, including prior advisors who will be allowed to reapply to the advisory boards for consideration. Federal Register notices have been published to solicit nominations from all qualified experts in a variety of disciplines to the SAB, the SAB standing committees, and the CASAC, and Administrator Regan is expected to make final selections within months of experts that will provide independent advice on scientific and technical matters underlying the agency's major policies and actions.

The EPA administrator, meanwhile, has received criticism for his swift overhaul of the agency's two key advisory panels that led to the removal of dozens of scientists and experts from science advisory boards. In a letter sent to Administrator Regan on April 7, U.S. Representatives James Comer (R-Kentucky) and Ralph Norman (R-South Carolina) requested documents and information be provided to Congress about the decision to fire these officials, including the process used for this unprecedented decision.

"Traditionally science advisory boards are bipartisan panels used to provide advice to the administrator. Unfortunately, it appears the Biden Administration is continuing to purge officials in the government who do not share its political beliefs," argued Congressman Comer, the senior Republican on the House Oversight Committee, and Congressman Norman, the top Republican on the panel's environment subcommittee. "Your apparent decision to use a political litmus test to determine who should serve on EPA scientific advisory boards raises serious concerns about the politicization of the EPA... Indeed, removing science advisory board members simply because they were appointed by a different political party seriously undermines the credibility of EPA and its advisory boards."

John Graham, a former George W. Bush administration official who formerly chaired the SAB, also told the *Associated Press* that he was saddened by Regan's "radical action," which he said disrupted every board member's service and hampered the panel's work.

## Energy Department announces \$35 million for cleaner solutions for the oil, gas and coal sectors

The U.S. Department of Energy in early April said it would offer \$35 million in funding as part of a new program focused on developing technologies to reduce methane emissions in the oil, gas and coal industries. According to the Energy Department, the three-year research program being called REMEDY (that stands for "Reducing Emissions of Methane Every Day of the Year") will specifically address three target methane production sources in the oil, gas, and coal value chains:

- Exhaust from natural gas-fired lean-burn engines used to drive compressors, generate electricity, and increasingly repower ships;
- Flares required for safe operation of oil and gas facilities; and
- Coal mine ventilation air methane (VAM) exhausted from operating underground mines.

A key REMEDY process performance metric regulators are striving to hit is reducing net greenhouse gas emissions by more than 87 percent on a life cycle basis. This goal ensures proposed solutions provide a holistic environmental benefit, said the Energy Department, and if successful, would have the potential to reduce U.S. methane emissions by at least 60 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e (carbon dioxide equivalents) per year.

"We don't have to choose between climate, jobs, energy, and security if we can invent the best greenhouse gas-reducing technologies. Methane reduction is a critical priority for shale regions like western Pennsylvania and will be a strategic advantage for the United States," said U.S. Representative Conor Lamb (D-Pennsylvania), who is also leading a push in Congress to see the federal government strengthen methane emission standards for the oil and gas industry as part of a larger effort to tackle climate change.

The department's funding opportunity through REMEDY in particular will support projects that can be replicated easily and commercialized quickly to cut methane accumulation in the atmosphere and mitigate the effects of climate change.

Additional information on the REMEDY funding opportunity can be found by visiting: <https://bit.ly/3a9naPh>.

## Apache Corp. praised by McDonald Observatory for commitment to dark-skies friendly lighting

As part of a new program honoring businesses and organizations in West Texas implementing lighting practices that've reduced excess light to preserve the night sky, the University of Texas at Austin's McDonald Observatory recently recognized oil and gas producer Apache Corporation for its leadership with improved lighting practices at its oil and gas sites in West Texas that has helped keep the skies dark for telescopes used by researchers to study the universe. Apache, a member of the Texas Independent Producers & Royalty Owners Association (TIPRO), has for years worked closely with the observatory on developing better options for lighting at drilling locations, including shielding and adjusting lights to reduce glare, improve visibility and decrease the amount of light pollution in the sky.

"Preserving the dark skies around McDonald Observatory is critical to both the scientific research and public outreach components of our mission," said Taft Armandroff, director of McDonald Observatory. "Our dark West Texas skies enable astronomers to study a faint galaxy whose light has traveled to us over billions of years, and also facilitate a visitor from a large city to see the Milky Way for the first time."

Apache gifted \$257,000 to the McDonald Observatory almost two years ago to help the observatory continue to combat regional light pollution and support the observatory's efforts to keep skies dark. The funds Apache provided to McDonald Observatory allowed for the hiring of additional staff and the creation of resources and educational materials about the observatory's Dark Skies Program, which works with city councils, county governments, and businesses to promote good lighting solutions. Furthermore, the partnership with Apache Corporation has also allowed the observatory to work on a number of other projects promoting dark skies, it says, including the development of a new permanent exhibit and other new public programs designed to help educate visitors and neighbors about preserving the night sky.

"We are grateful to the McDonald Observatory for their partnership over the years. Through our collaboration, we have worked to educate others about the need for dark skies and designed and modified our facilities' lighting to help protect the observatory's research," said Clay Bretches, executive vice president of operations for Apache Corporation and Altus Midstream CEO and president. "No matter our size or the nature of our business, we all have a role in keeping this part of Texas so special."

Over the years, TIPRO has also supported McDonald Observatory and its efforts to protect dark skies by encouraging oil and gas companies to reduce light shining into the sky from drilling rigs and other oilfield facilities in West Texas.

## Marathon Oil launches grant program to support teachers

Marathon Oil, a member of the Texas Independent Producers & Royalty Owners Association (TIPRO), announced in April it has created a new grant program aimed at recognizing and rewarding outstanding and innovative educators. Teachers in Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico and North Dakota are eligible to apply for Marathon Oil's grant or may be nominated by members of their community to receive funding to support the purchase of classroom resources, such as books, activity/lab materials and technology, or personal professional development.

"At Marathon Oil, unconventional thinking means constantly looking for new ways to solve problems and deliver results. As part of our investment in building stronger communities through education, we want to support teachers who are bringing this same unconventional thinking to the classroom," explained the company. "Our hope is that, through this program, we'll increase teacher retention by demonstrating support for the people who are responsible for developing our next generation of leaders, or unconventional thinkers. We also hope to encourage collaboration by asking the winning teachers to share their innovative ideas with all the teachers who apply."

Eligible winners must be full-time teachers, education support professionals, or specialized instructional support personnel, noted Marathon in its program rules. The program is not limited to specific courses or grade levels.

Applicants will be judged based on the following criteria: demonstration of "unconventional thinking"; alignment with Marathon Oil's values to collaborate, take ownership, be bold and deliver results; and a commitment to ensuring inclusive and equitable education for all students.

After the application window closes, the company said that submissions will be judged by a panel of Marathon Oil employees and reviewed by select Marathon Oil community partners with experience in education. All applications will be reviewed by at least three members of the judging panel, based on the volume of applications received.

Individual grant awards will likely range between \$2,500 and \$5,000, though exact grant amounts will be determined based on the number of winners and current program budget, said Marathon Oil.

Applications for the program will be accepted until June 15, 2021, and winners will be announced in September.

For more information on how to apply, or to submit a nomination, visit Marathon's website at <https://www.marathonoil.com/teachers/>.

## Texans by Nature to host virtual conservation summit on April 20<sup>th</sup>

The Texans by Nature (TxN), a nonprofit founded in 2011 by former First Lady Laura Bush to work with Texas businesses to promote natural resource conservation, will host its 2021 conservation summit next Tuesday, April 20. Presenters at the summit will address the future of conservation, the theme of the event. The event is free to attend online.

As part of the summit, a panel of speakers, including oil refiner Marathon Petroleum, will talk about how businesses, landowners and communities can collaborate to yield greater conservation of the environment. Other panels during the event will review strategies for fostering conservation as Texas' population explodes and mass urbanization continues across the state, exploring how the state can reimagine bringing plentiful resources together to deliver innovative places, resilient landscapes and natural resources, equitable access, and economic opportunities in a way that will benefit every Texan at work, at play, and at home.

The event is sponsored by several oil and gas companies and TIPRO members, including EOG Resources and XTO Energy.

For more information on the TxN program or to register for the virtual summit, please visit <https://bit.ly/2Rt7HTL>.

## **“Energy is key to our health and wealth, yet the public understands little about it”**

**“We tolerate energy illiteracy at our own risk.”**

**By William Keffer, energy law professor at Texas Tech University**

Question: What is the one essential thing that we all need — and expect — all the time in everything we do, and yet know precious little about?

In an era of having access to all past and present knowledge ever created in all of recorded history, how is it that we can know and appreciate so little about the one thing that makes modern life in 2021 possible? Energy education is not only beneficial to those who seek it, it is also absolutely critical to our collective survival.

Energy determines the economic wealth or poverty of every nation in the world. And energy is so much more than just putting gas in the tank of our cars. In addition to gasoline for our cars and trucks, there is jet fuel for our airplanes, diesel for our ships, trains and trucks, and propane for home heating, not to mention a long list of other energy-creating compounds contained in oil and natural gas alone.

Then, there is electricity. The demand for dependable, continuous, affordable electricity in this high-tech world is only growing and doing so exponentially. Whether the energy sources for that electricity are natural gas, wind, solar, hydro, nuclear or all of the above, we in the developed countries expect it at all times, and those in developing countries understandably aspire to that expectation, too.

The recent collapse in the Texas electricity grid was a painful but clarifying lesson on the importance of understanding the role energy plays in our daily lives, and even our survival. At least for now, Texans have become much more interested in how we create energy, where it comes from, the advantages and disadvantages different energy sources present, and who makes the decisions on our access to the energy we need every day. Is it better to simply depend on our leaders, or shouldn't we know more about the subject ourselves?

American universities are increasingly aware of the need to offer more courses and degrees that expand our understanding of the importance of energy and how we get it. One such tangible step is the launch of new degrees, like the master's degree recently started at Texas Tech University. The Master of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies in Energy degree program was created in direct response to the private sector's desire for universities to offer a professional degree that is premised on an interdisciplinary curriculum that prepares energy professionals for the challenges of the future. In fact, over 150 American universities have just come together to create a new organization called Universities with Energy Institutes Collaborative. The private sector, government policymakers, and students are seeking more and better education on energy topics, and universities are taking meaningful steps to respond.

It is an exciting time to be in the energy business. The business might be changing, but it is only growing in importance. As author Alex Epstein says, “The energy business is the business that runs every other business.”

Energy education might sound abstract and theoretical, but it is perhaps the most necessary and practical education of all. Most people in the U.S. are the beneficiaries of such a well-developed economy that they have been lulled into having energy at their fingertips and never having to think twice about what makes that possible.

Energy illiteracy abounds, unfortunately, throughout our population, and even in our educational institutions. We tolerate that illiteracy at our own risk. To lead effectively on energy matters requires educated leaders. Energy knowledge leads to more informed and effective energy policy. Universities are the obvious institutions to take on this critical task of educating our next generation on energy. If we don't, who will?

Ignorance leads to dependence; and dependence leads to a place none of us should want to go.

*William R. Keffer is a professor of energy law and director of Energy Law Programs in the Texas Tech University School of Law. His column originally appeared in The Dallas Morning News.*

## **On its 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary, RRC looks back at the evolution of Texas' oil & gas regulatory oversight**

When the state legislature established the Railroad Commission (RRC) 130 years ago, oil and gas development had yet to accelerate. After all, the year the commission was created, most Texans were getting around by horse and food. Instead, lawmakers formed the regulatory agency in 1891 with the intent to provide order and predictability to a rapidly expanding railroad industry that controlled the flow of goods -- a direct tie to the body's name. It was not until 1919, roughly 18 years after the famous discovery of oil at Spindletop, that the RRC would see its duties expanded with new authorities that allowed the regulatory agency to set its first oil and gas rule. That rule, adopted in 1919, concerned the establishment of minimum distances between wells to protect field pressure and correlative rights.

Today, the commission no longer oversees railroads in Texas, having the last of its rail functions transferred away in 2005, but has gained a reputation world-round for its leadership overseeing and managing oil and gas development in the Lone Star State. “Over the past 130 years, the RRC has set itself apart as a global leader in regulatory excellence,” said RRC Chairman Christi Craddick. “The oil and gas industry is a critical component of our states' overall success and requires regulatory certainty and adaptation to keep up with an ever-evolving, technologically advanced private sector. I look forward to continuing to prioritize health, safety, and innovation alongside my fellow commissioners and agency staff as we maintain our status as the best agency in Texas.”

“While Texas has changed quite a bit since the creation of the commission,” said Commissioner Jim Wright, “our agency's mission to ensure the production of our state's natural resources is done safely and efficiently is more important than ever.”

The RRC recently published a broader discussion of the agency's history and ongoing efforts to embrace the latest technologies to better serve the public and improve its oversight of the oil and gas industry. TIPRO members can check out the commission's story by visiting <https://bit.ly/2PSa2HH>.

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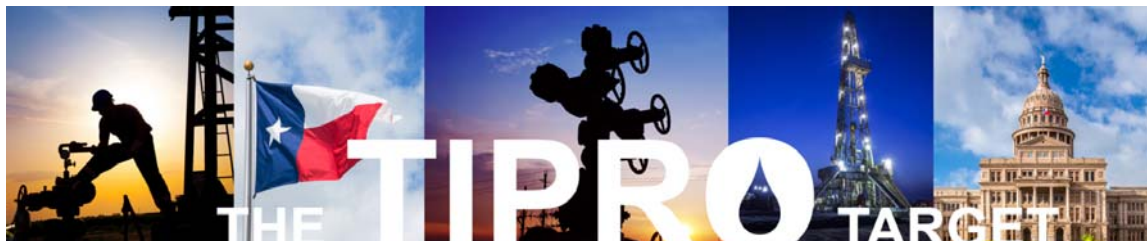
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