



"LAND IS THE BASIS OF ALL WEALTH"

# HAPL Newsletter



May 1, 2026

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★ THANK YOU FOR JOINING US! | SEE YOU IN SEPTEMBER! ★

# HAPL 2026-2027

## PROPOSED SLATE OF OFFICERS & DIRECTORS



Listed below is the proposed 2026-2027 slate of Officers and Directors that will be voted on at the May Luncheon on **Wednesday, May 6, 2026**, at the Petroleum Club. This list of incoming Officers and Directors will begin their term on July 1, 2026, and will serve through June 30, 2027.

**OFFICERS:**

**PRESIDENT:**  
 **Hunter Arbuckle, CPL**  
*Occidental Oil and Gas Corporation*

**FIRST VICE PRESIDENT:**  
 **Lance Young, RPL**  
*Swordfish Energy*

**SECOND VICE PRESIDENT:**  
 **Stephen Thompson, CPL**  
*Mitsui E&P USA*

**THIRD VICE PRESIDENT:**  
 **Everett Grossman, CPL**  
*BPX Energy Inc.*

**SECRETARY:**  
 **Kelley Myers, CPL**  
*Chevron*

**TREASURER:**  
 **Christine Touchstone, CPL**  
*LeFrak Energy*

**ASSISTANT TREASURER:**  
 **Taylor Cain**  
*Paloma Resources*

**IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT:**  
 **Kyle Lesak, CPL**  
*Percheron LLC*

**DIRECTORS (2 YEARS):**


 **Matthew Smith**  
*EOG Resources*

 **Taylor Roberts, CPL**  
*Chord Energy Corporation*

 **Tyler Moody, CPL**  
*Caturus Energy, LLC*

 **Jonathan Worbington**  
*Hilcorp Energy Company*

 **Crosby Garrison**  
*Occidental Oil and Gas Corporation*

 **THE FOLLOWING HAPL DIRECTORS, SERVING THE SECOND YEAR OF THEIR TWO (2) YEAR TERM, WILL NOT BE VOTED ON:**

- Colleen Bradley, CPL - *Spur Energy Partners LLC*
- Michelle Phillips, CPL - *Lime Rock Resources*
- Danielle Scott, CPL - *ExxonMobil*
- Jason Sebastinas, RPL - *Repsol E&P USA Inc.*
- Megan Tipton, CPL - *ConocoPhillips*



The Region IV AAPL Director representing HAPL for a two (2) year term will be **Mike Gibson** of Dudley Land Company.

(Note: The Region IV AAPL Director is appointed by the HAPL President and will not be voted on).



# Upcoming Events:

## HAPL Events:

**May 6**

HAPL Tribute to Education Luncheon, Petroleum Club

**May 14**

HAPL 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Celebration, Cattleman's Country Club

**May 20**

HAPL 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Board Meeting, Guadalajara

**May 27**

HAPL Past President Reception, Goode Co. Seafood

**June 13**

HAPL 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Fishing Tournament, West End Marina

**July 16**

HAPL 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual "Bridging the Gap" Summer Social, Highline Park

**August 19**

HAPL 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Board Meeting, The Union HTX

**September 2**

HAPL September Luncheon, Petroleum Club

*Please note there are no luncheons June – August.*

## Other Industry Events:

**May 7**

38th Annual Texas Energy Council Symposium, "Energy in Flux", Weaver Offices - Dallas

**May 12**

NHAPL May Luncheon, Woodlands Country Club

**June 24-26**


AAPL Annual Meeting, Salt Lake City

**August 3**

AAPL Southwest Land Institute, Arlington, TX


**August 26**

AAPL West Texas Energy Institute, Midland, TX

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## 2025-2026 HAPL Officers, Directors & Committee Chairmen

### Officers:

#### **President**

Kyle Lesak, CPL  
Percheron LLC

#### **First Vice President**

Hunter M. Arbuckle, CPL  
Occidental Petroleum

#### **Second Vice President**

Lance Young, RPL  
Independent

#### **Third Vice President**

Stephen Thompson, CPL  
Mitsui E&P USA LLC

#### **Secretary**

Michelle Llanes, RPL  
Senall Sabres, LLC

#### **Treasurer**

Everett Grossman, CPL  
BPX Energy, Inc.

#### **Assistant Treasurer**

Christine Touchstone, CPL  
LeFrak Energy

#### **Immediate Past President**

John Gerrish, CPL  
Organic E&P

### Directors:

#### **Director**

Colleen Bradley  
Spur Energy Partners LLC

#### **Director**

Eric Brunks, CPL  
Stedman West Interests

#### **Director**

Taylor Cain  
Paloma Resources

#### **Director**

Damian Katz, CPL  
Apache Corporation

#### **Director**

Kelley Myers, CPL  
Chevron

#### **Director**

Michelle Phillips, CPL  
Lime Rock Resources

#### **Director**

Danielle Scott, CPL  
ExxonMobil

#### **Director**

Jason Sebastinas, RPL  
Repsol USA

#### **Director**

Michelle Thibodeaux, RPL  
Independent

#### **Director**

Megan Tipton, CPL  
ConocoPhillips Company

#### **AAPL Director, Region IV**

C. Andrew Cooper, CPL  
Roger A. Soape, Inc.

### Committee Chairmen:

#### **AAPL Awards**

Beau Johnson, CPL  
AAPL Awards

#### **Annual Gala**

Michelle Thibodeaux, RPL  
Independent

#### **Co-Chair**

Ann Bui, RPL  
Apache Corporation

#### **Audit**

Everett Grossman, CPL  
BPX Energy, Inc.

#### **Clay Shoot**

Rhett Reeves, CPL  
Riverbend Oil & Gas LLC

#### **Co-Chair**

Shanna Graves  
Quorum Software

#### **Company of the Year Nominating Committee**

John Davis  
Kearney, McWilliams & Davis, PLLC

#### **Executive Night**

Tracy Santoro, RPL  
Talos Energy, Inc.

#### **Co-Chair**

Michael Peiler, CPL  
Drake Land Services, LLC

#### **Fall Seminar & Webinar**

Michelle Llanes, RPL  
Senall Sabres, LLC

#### **Golf**

Taylor Cain  
Paloma Resources

#### **Governmental Affairs**

John Gerrish, CPL  
Organic E&P

#### **Luncheons**

Lance Young, RPL  
Swordfish Energy

#### **Membership**

Blake Barnett, RPL  
Magnolia Oil & Gas

#### **Mentorship Program**

Eric Brunks, CPL  
Stedman West Interests

#### **Co-Chair**

Travis Hall  
Black Stone Minerals

#### **NAPE**

Lindsey Griffith  
HAPL

## 2025-2026 HAPL Officers, Directors & Committee Chairmen

### Newsletter & Website Oversight

Stephen Thompson, CPL  
Mitsui E&P USA LLC

### Offshore Liaison

Jason Sebastinas, RPL  
Repsol USA

### Outstanding Landman Nominating Committee

Christine Touchstone, CPL  
LeFrak Energy

### Outstanding Senior Landman Nominating Committee

John Gerrish, CPL  
Organic E&P

### Past Presidents Council

Mike Gibson, CPL  
Dudley Land Company

### Saltwater Fishing Tournament

Chris Shannon, CPL  
Shannon Law Firm, PLLC

### Co-Chair

Will Underwood, CPL  
WHU, Inc.

### Scholarship

Ashlee Hansen  
ConocoPhillips Company

### Service

Megan Tipton, CPL  
ConocoPhillips Company

### Co-Chair

Kelley Myers, CPL  
Chevron

### Social (Bridging the Gap)

Brandon Dodds, CPL  
Dudley Land Company

### Social (Louisiana)

Rodger Rains, CPL  
Apex Natural Gas, LLC

### Social (Permian Basin)

Kelley Myers, CPL  
Chevron

### Co-Chair

Carly Rhodes, RL  
ConocoPhillips

### Social (Rockies)

Damian Katz, CPL  
Apache Corporation

### Social (South Texas)

Joe Dichiara, RPL  
Independent

### Social (Women's Networking – Fall/Spring)

Colleen Bradley  
Spur Energy Partners LLC

### Co-Chair

Adriana Merlan  
Kirby, Mathews & Walrath PLLC

### Technical Workshop

Amanda L. Van Deusen, CPL  
Jackson Walker LLP

### Tribute to Education

Aaron Gray, RPL  
Perdido Energy

### University Liaison

Katelyn Ary  
SM Energy

### Get Involved with HAPL – Volunteer Today!

As a valued member of the Houston Association of Professional Landmen, we invite you to take the next step in supporting our mission by getting involved in one of our volunteer committees.

By lending your time and expertise, you'll help shape the future of our industry and make a meaningful difference in our local community. When we work together, we accomplish great things.

If you're interested in learning more about how you can get involved, please reach out to us at [hapl@hapl.org](mailto:hapl@hapl.org).

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to HAPL. Let's make an impact together.





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# HAPL Officer Forum



Taylor Cain  
2025-2026 HAPL Director

Many of my colleagues have written articles about our theme for the year 'Participation Fuels Progress' and all did a great job digging into how HAPL exists at the intersection of networking, learning, and charitable fundraising. A place where generosity meets business cards and everyone pretends they remember each other's names. Instead of finding ways to reiterate more of the same, I am here to present a completely unsolicited report card on how your participation impacted HAPL. No one likes a participation trophy in the proverbial sense, so here are some things for which you can be proud and gold stars for good measure.



Attendance – 4 stars

This year's events saw much greater attendance than years past. This is especially true for our happy hours, fancy dinners and sporting events. Docked a star because we all need to be better at attending the lunches, myself included. The food is great, the speakers are insightful and it's only 2 hours each month of your time, general travel included.



Fund Raising – 5 stars

Record breaking fundraising for HAPL Charities, our 501c3. You proved that this industry does more than just refine methods of extracting hydrocarbons, we refined our sense of responsibility, too. I had the privilege of witnessing these efforts firsthand at the golf tournament where our golfers and attendees raised over \$60,000 dollars for HAPL Charities and our on-course community partners. If you really want to feel a part of this momentous win, we have a giant commemorative check that you can take a picture with.



Networking – 5 stars

I can emphatically say, the events hosted this year had more diverse attendance and fresh new faces and corporate support than many years past. It's also great to see all the new volunteers stepping up to support HAPL. Continue to invite a colleague or encourage a business partner to come to our incredible events. New people leads to new ideas.

In an industry constantly adapting to change, participation keeps us grounded, connected, and forward-looking. When we show up, again and again, we don't just fuel progress. We make it a little more human, a little more generous, and a lot more effective.



# 37<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL HAPL CELEBRATION

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- 10% donated to HAPL Charities



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- 10% donated to HAPL Charities

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- Liquor Station Sponsor – \$500  
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- Reserved Table for 8 – \$500



### SILVER SPONSOR – \$500+

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### BRONZE SPONSOR – \$250+

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Enjoy an unforgettable performance by Britt Godwin!



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Join us as we recognize HAPL Senior Landman of the Year!

### RAFFLE!

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★ **MAY 14, 2026** ★

**CATTLEMAN'S COUNTRY CLUB**

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★ **5:30 PM – 10:00 PM** ★

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# HAPL Women's Networking Spring Social - Recap

By: Adriana Merland Women's Networking Social Co-Chair

On March 27, 2026, the HAPL Women's Networking Spring Social brought an incredible wave of energy, connection, and celebration to Tejas Brewery. With one of our largest turnouts to date, including many first-time attendees, the evening was a powerful reminder of the strength and community that women in the oil and gas industry continue to build together.

This year's Spring Social marked a milestone moment for our committee and our organization: the presentation of the inaugural Grit & Grace Award, an honor created by the HAPL Women's Networking Social Committee to recognize a woman who embodies resilience, leadership, mentorship, and unwavering professionalism. We were thrilled to present this first-ever award to Taylor Cain, Land Manager - Acquisitions for Paloma Permian, LLC, a subsidiary of Paloma Resources, LLC, whose example of strength and kindness has made a meaningful impact on those around her.

Attendees also enjoyed a brand-new experience at this year's event, personalized engraving, offered for the first time and quickly becoming a crowd favorite. The line never slowed down, and the excitement around this special touch added an extra layer of fun and connection throughout the evening.

At the heart of every HAPL Women's Networking Social is our mission: to create a welcoming environment where women in the oil and gas industry can build relationships, empower one another, share experiences, and celebrate the strong, capable professionals we are. Hosting this event twice a year is a privilege, and we are deeply grateful for the enthusiasm and support that make it possible. Thank you to all of our sponsors for supporting women in the oil and gas industry!

We're already looking ahead to the next gathering, and we're committed to making it even more memorable, meaningful, and inspiring than the last.









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# Texas Takes the Wheel: The Railroad Commission's Class VI Well Primacy and What It Means for Carbon Capture in the Lone Star State

By: *Sarah Milocco and Madeline Thomas, Husch Blackwell*

March 27, 2026

Carbon capture and storage (CCS) is rapidly emerging as one of the most consequential areas of energy law and environmental regulation. At its heart sits a technical but critically important regulatory category: the Class VI injection well. These wells are used to inject carbon dioxide into deep rock formations for the purpose of long-term underground storage, making them the cornerstone of any commercial-scale CCS project. For years, permitting authority for Class VI wells located in Texas rested solely with the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), resulting in a process many in the energy industry found slow and uncertain.

That all changed last fall. In November 2025, the State of Texas formally received primary enforcement authority, or “primacy”, for its Class VI Underground Injection Control (UIC) program, granting the Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC) regulatory power over these types of wells and, consequently, the CCS process.

This article examines how Texas achieved this milestone, how the state strategically positioned itself for a seamless transition by accepting applications and fees years in advance, and the status of those permit applications today.

## **What Is a Class VI Well and Why Does Primacy Matter?**

The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), passed in 1974, protects public health by regulating the nation's public drinking water supply, including both surface and groundwater sources. Among other things, the SDWA requires the EPA to develop minimum requirements for effective UIC programs in order to prevent underground injection of fluids from endangering underground sources of drinking water (USDWs).

The SDWA provides that an applicant seeking primacy for a UIC program must demonstrate that the applicant's program meets the applicable requirements promulgated by the EPA for protecting USDWs, which means that it must possess jurisdiction over underground injection as well as the administrative, civil, and criminal enforcement authorities required by the EPA's implementing regulations. When a state achieves primacy, it steps into the EPA's shoes as the primary permitting and enforcement agent.

On November 12, 2025, the EPA announced a final rule granting the State of Texas primary implementation and authority for Class VI Underground Injection Control. Soon after publication of the final rule, the Texas Railroad Commission (RRC) was officially granted primary enforcement responsibility for the UIC Class VI program. This made Texas the sixth state to receive primacy for its Class VI UIC program from the EPA, following Arizona, West Virginia, Louisiana, Wyoming, and North Dakota.

Why does this matter? Texas' Class VI UIC primacy solidifies its position as a leader in the development of the CCS industry in the U.S. It is also anticipated to reduce “red tape” and delays associated with federal EPA review, which can take years to complete due to a lengthy application process and a substantial backlog related to the engineering and geologic complexity of Class VI UIC wells and the CCS projects they support.

## **Texas Gave Itself a Head Start**

One of the most noteworthy aspects of Texas' approach to Class VI primacy was its deliberate strategy of accepting permit applications and collecting fees before it formally received authority from the EPA. This forward-thinking approach ensured that the RRC would not be starting from scratch the day primacy took effect.

Crucially, the Texas Railroad Commission adopted new rules governing carbon capture and sequestration and storage at its August 22, 2023 Open Meeting. These rules went into effect on September 11, 2023 and allowed Texas to begin accepting and reviewing permit applications using the EPA's Geologic Storage Data Tool, running reviews in parallel with the federal agency. From then until the RRC received Class VI primacy, any applicant for geologic storage of anthropogenic CO<sub>2</sub> unrelated to Enhanced Oil Recovery would need to submit an application to both EPA and the RRC.

This approach paid further dividends. The state began charging companies a \$50,000 application fee and a \$25,000 permit amendment. Further, until the CCS facility is closed, the adopted rule required operators to pay an annual fee of \$50,000 for each

year they did not inject. With these funds, the Railroad Commission staffed its Class VI office with four technical reviewers, three engineering specialists, and a geoscientist.

Therefore, from the moment the RRC received primacy, it already had pending permits in hand, the necessary funds to review, and staff prepared to process applications.

### **Current Projects: A Snapshot of Texas' Class VI Applications**

The most recent RRC tracker for active Class VI well applications (updated March 11, 2026) reflects a diverse set of operators and project types and spans the state from the Permian Basin to the Texas Gulf Coast:

- **Oxy Low Carbon Ventures, LLC** — Brown Pelican Project, Ector County (Permian Basin): Three injection wells into the Lower San Andres formation, submitted May 23, 2022. This is the earliest submitted application. It was approved by the EPA on October 16, 2025, just before Texas received primacy. The RRC will now oversee regulation of this facility, which is designed to store up to 8.5 million metric tons of carbon over 12 years.
- **BP Carbon Solutions, LLC** — Jasper County Storage Facility, Jasper County: Four injection wells into the Frio formation, submitted June 29, 2023. Currently on hold by the operator.
- **Milestone Carbon Midland CCS Hub, LLC** — South Midland Facility, Upton County: One injection well into the Devonian formation, submitted December 6, 2023. The application is currently in the comment period for draft permit, a significant milestone in the permitting process.
- **BP Carbon Solutions, LLC** — West Bay Storage Facility, Galveston County: Three injection wells into the Miocene formation, submitted December 18, 2023. Currently on hold by the operator.
- **White Energy Carbon Solutions, LLC** — Texas Carbon Storage I, Deaf Smith County: One injection well into the Granite Wash formation, submitted February 15, 2024. Currently on hold by the operator.
- **ExxonMobil Low Carbon Solutions Onshore LLC** — Rose CCS, Jefferson County: Three injection wells into the Fleming and Upper Frio formations, submitted March 14, 2024. This application has been protested and was referred to hearing on October 31, 2025. The hearing was held March 16, 2026 through March 20, 2026.
- **Titan Carbon Sequestration, LLC (Sempra)** — Titan CS, Jefferson County: Two injection wells into the Lower Miocene formation, submitted July 9, 2024. Currently on hold by the operator.
- **BKVerde, LLC** — Whites Bayou, Liberty County: One injection well into the Frio and Miocene formations, submitted July 19, 2024. Currently pending Request Additional Data (RAD) response.
- **Bluebonnet Sequestration Hub, LLC (Oxy)** — Bluebonnet, Chambers County: Six injection wells into the Frio and Hackberry formations, submitted August 6, 2024. Currently under review.
- **CDP II CO2 Sequestration, LLC** — Caliche Beaumont Sequestration, Jefferson County: Three injection wells into the Frio formation, submitted November 13, 2024. Currently pending RAD response.
- **Kleberg Sequestration Hub, LLC (Oxy)** — South Texas Sequestration (Kleberg Hub), Kleberg County: Six injection wells into the Frio formation, submitted November 19, 2024. Currently under review.
- **Bayou Bend CCS LLC (Chevron, Total, Equinor)** — Bayou Bend East Phase 1, Jefferson County: Six injection wells into the Lower Miocene 1 & 2 formations, submitted December 31, 2024. Currently pending RAD response.
- **ExxonMobil Low Carbon Solutions Onshore LLC** — Sunflower, Jefferson, and Liberty Counties: Three injection wells into the Frio and Fleming formations, submitted December 18, 2025. Currently under review.
- **Milestone Carbon Delaware CCS Hub, LLC** — Central Loving Facility, Loving County: Two injection wells into Devonian, Fusselman, and Ellenburger formations, submitted February 13, 2025. Currently on hold by the operator.
- **Sugarberry CCS LLC (Tenaska)** — Sugarberry CCS Geologic Storage Facility, Hopkins & Franklin Counties: Five injection wells into Woodbine & Paluxy formations, submitted June 6, 2025. Currently pending RAD response.
- **Orchard Storage Company** — Orchard, Gaines County: Seven injection wells into the San Andres formation, submitted June 25, 2025. Currently pending RAD response.
- **Repsol Earth Solutions USA LLC** — Offshore North 1, Aransas County: Four injection wells into Lower Miocene 1 & 2 formations, submitted August 6, 2025. Currently under review.

A closer look at any one of these projects illustrates the scale and ambition of what Texas is attracting. The Orchard Storage project, for instance, will inject approximately 27 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> over 12 years. This would make it one of the biggest CCS projects in the U.S. once operational.

**What Lies Ahead and Takeaways for the Industry**

The permit queue already reflects the breadth of industry interest in Texas as a CCS destination. Applications for ten projects with a total of 26 wells were submitted by the time Texas applied for primacy. The RRC anticipated in its primacy application that during the first two years after approval of the state’s Class VI program, permit applications for approximately 37 Class VI wells may be submitted, including applications for 25 Class VI wells in the first year and 12 Class VI wells in the second year. As of March 11, there are now 17 active applications, proving the validity of these predictions. The RRC expects that reviewing Class VI permit applications will require six months before issuance of a permit to drill/convert and six additional months before issuance of authorization to inject, assuming operators timely and accurately file all required information.

Unlike similar agencies in other states, the RRC is uniquely positioned to follow through on this ambitious timeline so early in the stages of primacy, as it can leverage its extensive experience in permitting other wells (including all other types of UIC wells) and its established Class VI review process. Through years of deliberate preparation, the Railroad Commission of Texas is now able to hit the ground running with its grant of Class VI primacy. With over a dozen applications already in hand and additional projects in the pipeline, Texas is set to become one of the nation’s leading jurisdictions for commercial-scale geological carbon sequestration.

**About the Authors**

Sarah Milocco, Associate – Chicago

[Sarah Milocco | Energy Regulatory and Real Estate Attorney | Chicago | Husch Blackwell](#)

Madeline Thomas, Senior Counsel - Houston

[Madeline Thomas | Energy Transactional Attorney | The Link | Husch Blackwell](#)

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**TIGHT LINES. STRONGER TOGETHER.**

# HAPL: It's beginnings As The Houston Landmen's Association - The First Ten Years 1947-56

Prepared by Paul F. Nielsen, CPL, HAPL President, 1992-1993, with the late Elmer G. Hamilton, CPL, as the primary source of first-hand information.

In the summer and fall of 1946, four, and later eight, landmen based in Houston met and agreed that an association of petroleum landmen should be established to promote personal acquaintances and to aid in professional enlightenment of landmen. For years Houston had been a leading petroleum center with active leasing, farmout and unitization transactions being handled by locally-based petroleum landmen. The eight men met together at Ye Old College Inn on South Main on November 23, 1946, to plan an organizational meeting. These eight charter or founding members were H. D. "Deep" Henderson of Sohio Oil Company, J. E. "Eric" Beall of Gulf Oil Company (later Chevron), E. H. "Everitt" Smith of Texaco Oil Company (later Chevron), H. H. "Hart" Kuester of Standard Oil Company of Texas (Chevron), J. S. "Jim" Hughes of Magnolia Petroleum Company (later Mobil, now Exxon Mobil), Otis N. Gammill of Pan American Petroleum Company (later Amoco, now BP), A. D. Hunter of Humble Oil & Refining Company (later Exxon, now Exxon Mobil), and J. E. "Sonny" Suttles of Union Oil Company of California (later Chevron).

An organizational meeting was held on December 1, 1946, at the Texas State Hotel in downtown Houston, located on Fannin at Rusk, with approximately 45 landmen present. At that meeting the Houston Landmen's Association was born and officers were elected for the first year, calendar year 1947. The 1947 officers were H. D. "Deep" Henderson, President; J. E. "Eric" Beall, Vice President; J. E. "Sonny" Suttles, Secretary; and H. H. "Hart" Kuester, Treasurer.

HAPL is believed to be the second oldest local landmen's organization in the nation, following establishment of the Jackson, Mississippi, association in about 1944. Not until 1955 was the national association organized, originally called the American Association of Petroleum Landmen (now the American Association of Professional Landmen, or AAPL).

Membership in the new Houston organization was restricted to "any professional landman employed by any oil, gas or sulphur company and headquartering in Houston." At that time, in addition to oil and gas, the sulphur industry was very active. Texas Gulf Sulphur was represented and was active in drilling for sulphur in the U.S. Gulf Coast, Canada and Mexico. Pan American Sulphur, represented by Vice President Don Snider, was also active. The use of the Frasch process, involving in situ recovery of sulphur through a borehole using steam, meant that the sulphur business was being conducted similar to oil and gas operations. Although the local and national landmen's organizations recognized and included landmen working in mineral operations other than oil, gas and sulphur, in the late 1940's landmen working with minerals other than oil, gas and sulphur were not active within the Houston Landmen's Association. Regular luncheon meetings were scheduled with programs pertinent to the petroleum industry. A monthly night meeting was also scheduled. The first luncheon was held at the Lamar Hotel in downtown Houston on January 27, 1947. At the end of that year, a first anniversary meeting was held at the Ben Milam Hotel in downtown Houston on December 1, 1947. By that time, the membership totaled 110. Annual dues were \$12.00.

In the late 1940's, and for many years thereafter, the companies represented were all located geographically within blocks of each other in downtown Houston. This made it very easy to conduct day or night meetings at a mutually convenient location downtown. The new organization was organized by the ranking landmen representing the various oil companies located in Houston. Clearly, the association was organized to include only landmen working as employees of such oil companies. Independent landmen were intentionally excluded from membership. The thought was that independents would be, and should be, working "in the field" and would not be available to attend meetings or participate in the organization's activities in the city. Elmer Hamilton also advises that independents were looked down on by company landmen, and not treated as being on the same professional level. It also appears that company landmen assigned to field work were not included as they, also, were expected to be in the field and not available for participation.

Elmer also recalls that in the early 1950's independent landmen, who were not entitled to Houston Landmen's Association membership, were being paid \$15 to \$25 per day and generally 2¢ per mile. He recalls that in one AAPL annual meeting in which membership for independents was debated, independents were referred to by one member as a "cancer" on the profession. Independent landmen were not admitted to HLA membership until the By-Laws were amended in 1962 to allow admission of Associate members. Later, the definition of "landman" for Active membership purposes was expanded to include all land professionals regardless of employment situation.

Attached as Exhibit "1" is a copy of the list of officers of the Houston Landmen's Association during the first ten years, from 1947 through 1956. (The Association did not change its name from the Houston Landmen's Association to the Houston Association of Petroleum Landmen (HAPL) until 1961. In 1992, consistent with the AAPL's name change, the organization's name changed to the

Houston Association of Professional Landmen, still HAPL.) Several characteristics of the early leadership of the organization stand out. First, the early officers were all male. The organization did not admit its first female member, Betty Lewis of Humble Oil & Refining Company, until 1969. In the late 1940's and early 1950's, the ranking landmen of the active local companies were all male. It was not a matter of discrimination; there were simply few, if any, female landmen. Second, the early leaders were generally the highest ranking landmen in the active local companies. Our first President, Deep Henderson, was then the ranking landman at Sohio; the Vice President, J. E. Beall, was his counterpart at Gulf; the Secretary, J. E. Suttles, was their counterpart at Union Oil Company of California; and the Treasurer, H. H. Kuester, was their counterpart at Standard Oil Company of Texas, as Division Landman.

Hart Kuester is remembered by Elmer Hamilton as an active local leader in the Boy Scouts who won a prestigious national leadership award, the Silver Beaver Award, in 1963. Past HAPL President Larry Harrison adds that Mr. Kuester was honored posthumously for his three decades of service by dedication of the Hart H. Kuester Training Lodge at Camp Strake (near Conroe, Texas) in July of 1979. According to Mr. Harrison, Camp Strake is the most heavily utilized Boy Scout Reservation in the nation, and the Kuester Training Lodge is its most prominent facility. Mr. Kuester died in Houston in 1978. His widow has relocated to Alamosa, Colorado, where his daughter lived (as of 1994), according to their son, Houston attorney, Noel J. Kuester.

In 1948, J. E. Beall succeeded "Deep" Henderson as President. In 1949, H. H. Kuester succeeded Beall as President. From inception, the practice of the organization was to advance each leader from lower to higher office in successive years, culminating in a presidential term. Occasionally, the chain was broken by the officer's employment transfer to a work location outside of the Houston area. In the 1980's the current practice became to advance our leaders over a longer period of time, without advancement up the chain of command in successive years.

In the early years our luncheon meetings were held weekly at convenient locations in downtown Houston. As the organization grew larger, by the 1970's luncheon meetings were being held downtown twice monthly. This is quite a contrast to the current practice, with broad geographic distribution of our membership locally, to have fewer meetings, but located in various parts of the city to better serve our membership.

In 1950, Wiley O. Summers became President. Wiley was then working as Land Manager for Glen McCarthy, Jr. He is remembered by Elmer Hamilton as a former high school teacher and coach at Reagan High School in Houston before entering the oil business. Summers' Vice President, A. D. Hunter, worked for Humble Oil & Refining Company, and succeeded Summers as President in 1951. Summers' Secretary, Gerald Faust, succeeded Hunter as President in 1952. Elmer Hamilton, who served as Secretary under Faust, recalls that Faust graduated from the South Texas College of Law and once gave an excellent unitization talk on the Old Ocean Field at an HAPL meeting. Faust worked for several companies and also had bought pipe for pipeline companies. He married a widow in Louisiana and eventually died in Baton Rouge.

When Faust left the area, Everitt C. Smith succeeded him as President effective March 1, 1952, to serve the remainder of Faust's term. Also serving with Elmer were H. J. "Sonny" Roberts, as Vice President, and J. K. "Jake" Bridges as Treasurer. Roberts worked for Gulf and had been Treasurer the preceding year, 1951. Elmer recalls that Sonny Roberts wanted to expand the landmen's association and, in particular, proposed that an office be set up and employees hired to form a permanent staff. Jake Bridges worked for Humble Oil & Refining Company.

In 1953, H. J. Roberts succeeded Everitt Smith as President. His Vice President was O. L. James, who worked for local independent operator, R. A. Welch. Elmer remembers James as a quiet gentleman, whom Roberts one time called "Landman of the Year", referring to his inheriting an interest in Welch's business upon Welch's death, along with Welch's other employees. Roberts' Secretary, P. L. Lyons of Lyons Oil Company, is remembered by Elmer as a nice, older fellow who retired and moved from the Houston area about five years later. Roberts' Treasurer, M. S. Brooks, Jr., known as Maurice or "Sonny", was an ex-LSU football player who worked for Union Producing Company (not Union of California), based in Shreveport, Louisiana. Elmer recalls that Brooks, who succeeded Roberts as President in 1954, later died of cancer in his 40's.

Effective in 1954, the By-Laws of the association were amended to provide for the additional offices of Second and Third Vice President, and to provide for four Directors. Brooks' first Vice President, Presley E. Vinson, worked for Amerada Petroleum and succeeded Brooks as President in 1955. Elmer Hamilton advises that Vinson's brother, Kitt, worked for Elmer as an independent in the 1960's, and that Vinson's daughter, Carolyn, became a landman and also worked for Elmer. Brooks' Second Vice President, William F. Kissling, worked for Sohio and is remembered by Elmer as one of the finest individuals he has ever met. Kissling came from an accounting background. Brooks' Third Vice President, Lloyd J. Taylor, worked for Ohio Oil Company. Brooks' Secretary, David E. Lowrey, Jr., is remembered by Elmer as an excellent landman and worked for Fifteen Oil Company. Brooks' Treasurer, Albert N. Tanner, worked for Sinclair.

The initial directors included George R. Bixler, Jr., who worked for Sohio and was still living in as of 1994, but we understand has passed away. Elmer recalls that Bixler headed a committee in the early 1950's to determine whether a national landmen's organization was needed. The decision was made that it was not then necessary. However, within several years the American Association of Petroleum Landmen (AAPL) was established, based in Fort Worth, Texas, and Bixler became AAPL President several years after its establishment. Director Joe C. Coulter worked for Humble Oil & Refining Company. Other directors in the initial group were James B. Darby and J. W. "Jim" McDugald, Jr., of Texaco.

Elmer Hamilton was a good source for anecdotes about the early days of the organization. In particular he recalled that while he was Secretary in 1952, he organized a night meeting at Bill Williams' Restaurant on South Main. Elmer arranged to have a good ham dinner at considerable expense. With 83 reservations, only 17 members attended due to a five-inch deluge. When the restaurant insisted on charging the organization for all the meals, Elmer quickly mobilized the small group to take home all the food.

In 1954 the Houston Landman's Association, by ballot, declined to affiliate itself with the AAPL expressing a desire that AAPL membership be a voluntary decision of the individual landman. Also in 1954, the association's first Management Night (now called Executive Night) meeting was held on May 7, 1954, at the Texas State Hotel in downtown Houston.

In 1955 Presley E. Vinson of Amerada Petroleum became President, with William F. Kissling as First Vice President. Among the directors was Elmer Hamilton. Also active as an officer was J. P. "Phil" McGowan of Conoco who replaced Richard Savit as Second Vice President for the second half of the 1955 term upon Savit's transfer from Houston. As of 1994, Mr. McGowan still lived in Houston and was retired but has since passed away. He was remembered by Conoco colleague Felix Nigh, now also deceased, as chairman of the AAPL committee that worked to establish the Petroleum Land Management (PLM) degree at various universities, the first one being at the University of Oklahoma in the late 1950's. Longtime HAPL member Milton Brand recalls that after Vinson served as President, he died the very next year in late 1956. Milton was transferred from Tulsa to Houston by Amerada to replace Vinson as District Landman.

In 1956 Kissling succeeded Vinson as President. Among the officers was Leland Don Brooks, Treasurer. As of 1994, Mr. Brooks was retired and living in Sugar Land. Membership in the organization at the end of 1956 is estimated to be 300 (by 1958, the membership directory listed 400 members).

Through this article, we hope to pay tribute to those landmen, named herein and anonymous, who gave unselfishly of their time and resources to establish and nurture HAPL through its early years.

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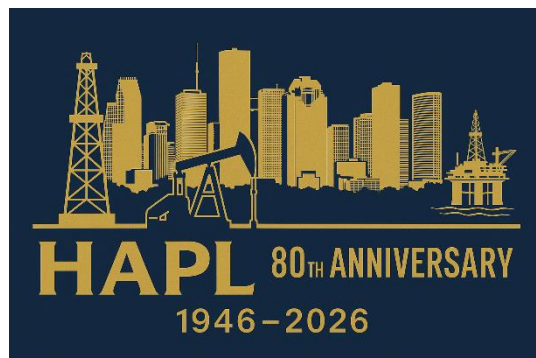
As we reflect on HAPL's early beginnings and the vision of those who came before us, we are especially proud to celebrate our 80th Anniversary in 2026. From a small group of dedicated landmen in 1946 to an organization of approximately 1,000 members today, HAPL continues to thrive as one of the most active and respected local associations in the energy industry.

Over the decades, HAPL and its members have earned recognition at the American Association of Professional Landmen Annual Meeting, including multiple honors as Local Association of the Year, along with numerous individual achievements that reflect the professionalism and leadership within our membership. These accolades are a direct result of the strength, engagement, and dedication of our members.

This milestone year is a testament to the countless volunteers who have given their time, leadership, and talents to HAPL. From committee service and board leadership to event support and mentorship, their contributions have shaped HAPL into the organization it is today. One that fosters education, connection, and professional growth across our industry.

To every member, past and present, who has served, supported, and strengthened HAPL over the past 80 years, thank you. Your dedication ensures that HAPL remains a vibrant, impactful community and a leader among local associations for generations to come.

- Lindsey Griffith  
HAPL Executive Administrator





# AAPL AWARD RECIPIENTS

By: *Beau L. Johnson, CPL*  
AAPL Award Committee Chairman

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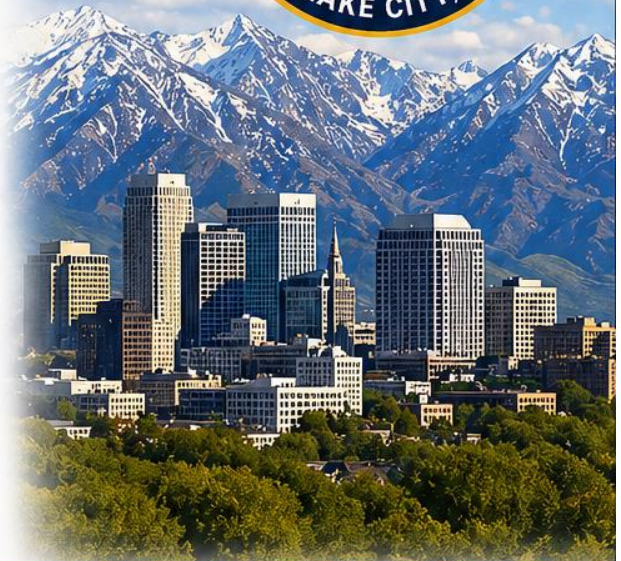
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If you have a nomination or if you would like to participate on the committee to review and select HAPL's nominations for next year's AAPL Awards, please contact Beau Johnson, CPL at [Beau.L.Johnson@gmail.com](mailto:Beau.L.Johnson@gmail.com).

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# HAPL 27<sup>th</sup> Annual South Texas Social - Event Recap

By: Joe Dichiara, South Texas Social Chair

The 27th Annual HAPL South Texas Social was held on Wednesday, April 01, 2026, at Goode Co. Armadillo Palace on Kirby. A very enthusiastic crowd of approximately 200 plus Landmen and other oil and gas professionals gathered to socialize, make some new contacts and discuss these exciting times in the South Texas & Eagle Ford oil patches.

Thanks to all the generous sponsors, especially Al Rivera of Al's Custom Boot's. Congratulations to all the door prizes winners and raffle winners.

A special thanks to Click Energy, LLC for donating the wine for the raffle as well as this year's following sponsors:

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A special thanks to my committee for their help; Steve Thompson with Mitsui E&P USA, LLC, Tyler Moody with Caturus Energy, LLC and Jonathan Click with Click Energy, LLC. I would like to personally thank all the sponsors, along with Lindsey Griffith and Melinda Barton who helped with registration and selling raffle tickets this year. Again, thanks to everyone who helped make this year's HAPL South Texas Social so successful.









# Asset-Backed Securities Financing in the Energy Sector: What Upstream and Midstream Companies Should Know

By: [Henry Benton](#) and [Bill Swanstrom](#), [Troutman Pepper Locke](#)

April 24, 2026

Asset-backed securities (ABS) structures are reemerging as an important financing tool across the energy sector, particularly for upstream and midstream companies with stable, predictable cash flows. As borrowing bases tighten, traditional bank lending becomes more constrained, and private credit continues to expand, companies are increasingly exploring securitization structures as an alternative source of capital.

While securitization structures have long been used in the energy industry — particularly for royalty interests and pipeline assets — recent market activity suggests renewed interest in ABS transactions backed by producing assets, mineral interests, midstream infrastructure revenues, and long-term contracted cash flows.

## ABS Structures in Energy Transactions

In a typical energy ABS transaction, a company transfers certain revenue-generating assets or cash flow streams into a special purpose vehicle (SPV), which then issues securities backed by those cash flows. Investors are repaid from the revenue generated by the underlying assets, and the structure is typically designed to be bankruptcy-remote from the operating company.

Because the financing is tied to specific assets and cash flows rather than the company's overall balance sheet, ABS structures can sometimes provide lower-cost, long-term, nonrecourse financing compared to traditional corporate debt.

## Upstream Applications

In the upstream sector, ABS structures are often backed by producing assets or revenue streams with relatively predictable cash flows. These may include royalty interests, mineral interests, proved developed producing (PDP) reserves, production payment structures, hedged production revenues, and water infrastructure revenues. These structures can allow companies to monetize producing assets without selling the underlying properties, while still retaining operational control and upside exposure.

ABS financing may also be used in connection with acquisitions, refinancing reserve-based lending facilities, or returning capital to investors.

## Midstream Applications

Midstream assets are often particularly well-suited for securitization structures because they are supported by contracted or tariff-based revenue streams. ABS transactions in the midstream sector may be backed by pipeline tariff revenues, gathering system revenues, storage terminal fees, processing plant revenues, liquefied natural gas (LNG) infrastructure fees, and long-term take-or-pay or minimum volume commitment contracts.

Because these assets often generate stable, long-term cash flows, they may be attractive to securitization investors seeking infrastructure-like investment profiles.

## Key Structuring Considerations

Energy ABS transactions involve a number of structuring and legal considerations, including true sale and bankruptcy-remoteness issues, security interests and collateral packages, contract assignment and consent requirements, hedging arrangements, intercreditor issues with existing lenders, regulatory considerations (including potential Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) jurisdiction for certain midstream assets), environmental liabilities associated with pledged assets, securities law disclosure requirements, and tax structuring considerations.

Given the complexity of these transactions and the variety of assets and contracts involved, early coordination among legal, financial, and technical advisors is often important when evaluating whether a securitization structure is appropriate.

## Market Outlook

Market participants expect ABS structures to continue gaining traction in the energy sector, particularly as private credit funds, infrastructure investors, and insurance companies continue to seek long-duration assets with predictable cash flows. Securitization structures may become increasingly common for mature upstream producing assets, mineral and royalty portfolios, midstream infrastructure systems, and other energy assets supported by long-term contracted revenues.

As capital markets continue to evolve, ABS structures may become an increasingly important complement to reserve-based lending, project finance, and traditional corporate debt for energy companies seeking flexible financing solutions.

As the use of ABS financing continues to expand across both upstream and midstream energy assets, companies evaluating these structures will benefit from advisors who understand the technical, commercial, and legal nuances of securitizing producing assets and contracted midstream revenues.

#### About the Authors

Henry Benton, Partner - Dallas

[Henry D. Benton - Troutman Pepper Locke](#)

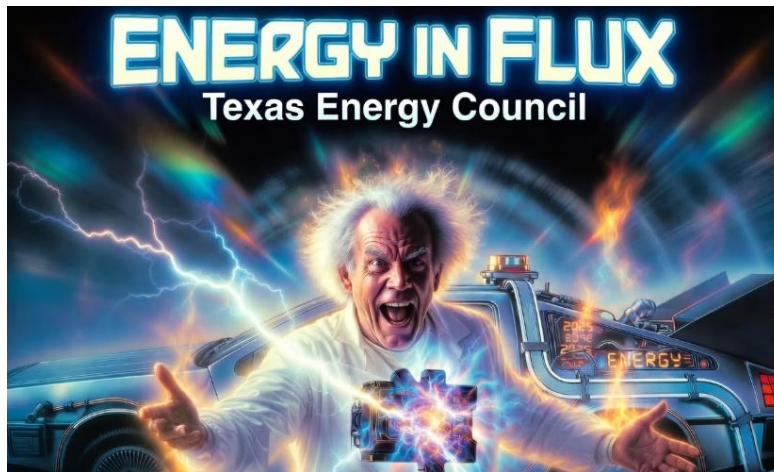
Bill Swanstrom, Partner – Houston

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## 38th Annual Texas Energy Council Symposium



You are cordially invited to attend the 38th Annual Texas Energy Council Symposium, "Energy in Flux" on Thursday, May 7th at the offices of Weaver in Dallas.

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- Dwayne Purvis, P.E., Founder and Principal Advisor, Purvis Energy Advisors – Plugging Wells
- Vincent Cuccerre, CPL, Land Manager, NorthStar – JOAs
- Ben Sebree, Principal, Sebree Law Firm PLLC – Geothermal Energy Revolution
- Ashly Pleasant, Director of Sustainability Services, Weaver – AI & Datacenters
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# HAPL 57<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL TECHNICAL WORKSHOP



The 57<sup>th</sup> Annual HAPL Technical Workshop, a nationwide education seminar, was hosted this year at the ExxonMobil Campus in Spring, Texas and broadcast live via Zoom Webinar on Tuesday, April 7, 2026. The event was once again a tremendous success, offering an advanced educational opportunity for its attendees, including seven (7) CE Credits with Ethics for the landman RPL/CPL certification from AAPL, CLE accreditation in Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, New Mexico, and Colorado, as well as continuing education credits from NALTA and NADOA.

This year's nationwide HAPL Technical Workshop brought together 405 Land Professionals, Analysts, and Attorneys, with 297 joining virtually and 108 attending in person at the beautiful ExxonMobil Campus in The Woodlands, TX. Participants represented 179 companies and law firms from 15 states and 74 cities—including as far away as Alaska! Attendees, including 175 Non-HAPL Members, 156 HAPL Members, and 74 ExxonMobil employees, gained valuable insights into industry trends, regulatory updates, and best practices in land management and ethics, equipping them to face emerging challenges in the energy, law, and renewable sectors.

The Workshop would not have been possible without the exceptional work, dedication, and support provided by the HAPL Technical Workshop Committee Members. Thank you all:

- Danielle Scott, CPL with ExxonMobil
- Michael Llanes, RPL with Senall Sabres, LLC
- Michelle F. Llanes, RPL with Senall Sabres, LLC
- Mark S. Cunningham, Jr., CPL with ExxonMobil
- Ryan Brooks, JD, CPL with ExxonMobil
- Tegan Wisnosky, CPL with ExxonMobil
- Craig Wiest, CPL with ExxonMobil
- Michelle Phillips, CPL with Lime Rock Resources
- Dedra Nunez with ExxonMobil

I would like to also personally recognize Lindsey Griffith, Executive Administrator with HAPL, for going above and beyond with her assistance in marketing, development of the Tech Workshop flyers, correspondence, attendee registration, and remote location coordination. Without Lindsey's collaboration and support, the Technical Workshop would not be possible.

A special thank you to our speakers for their brilliant, timely, and well-received presentations:

- Benjamin "Ben" Holliday, President of Holliday Energy Law Group
- Jenny Forgey, Senior Counsel with Jackson Walker LLP
- Corey F. Wehmeyer, Managing Shareholder of Santoyo Wehmeyer P.C.
- Joey D. King, CPLTA, New Plays Landman with Repsol Oil & Gas, LLC
- Brian T. Wittpenn, Senior Attorney with Kearney McWilliams & Davis, PLLC
- Scott A. Angelle, Founder of USA Energy Workers
- Jasper Mason, CPL, Adjunct Professor of Oil & Gas Law with the University of Houston Law Center

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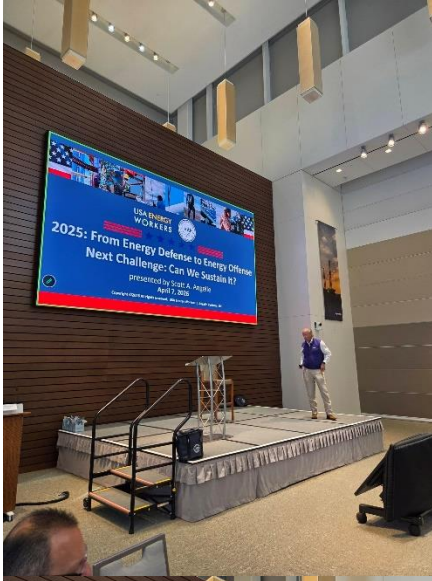
*We greatly appreciate the ongoing support and engagement from HAPL members, land professionals, analysts, and legal experts across the country. We anticipate another productive and successful HAPL Technical Workshop in April 2027. Hope to see you there!*

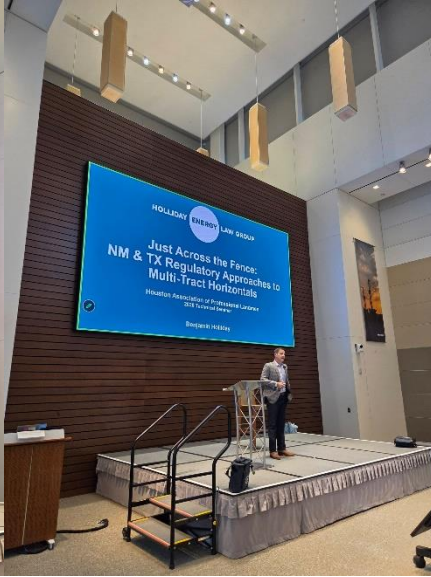
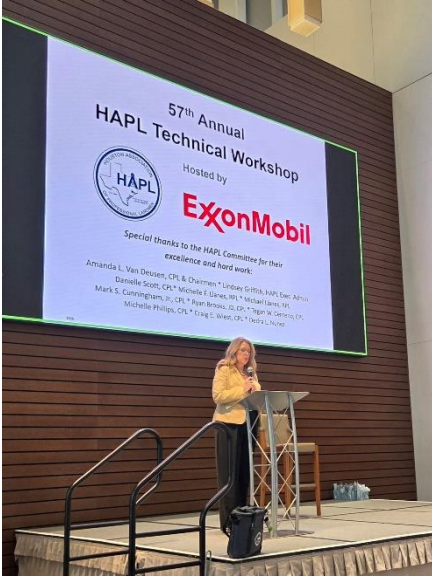
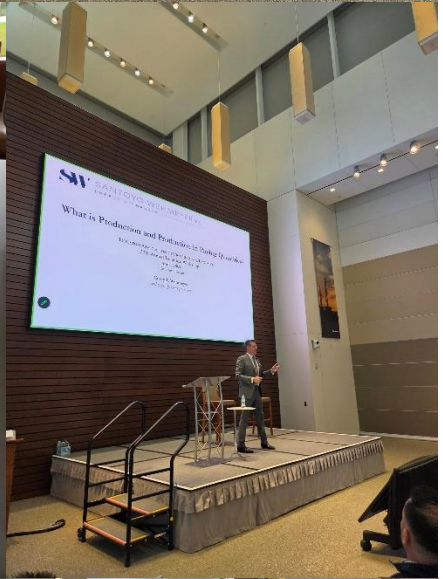
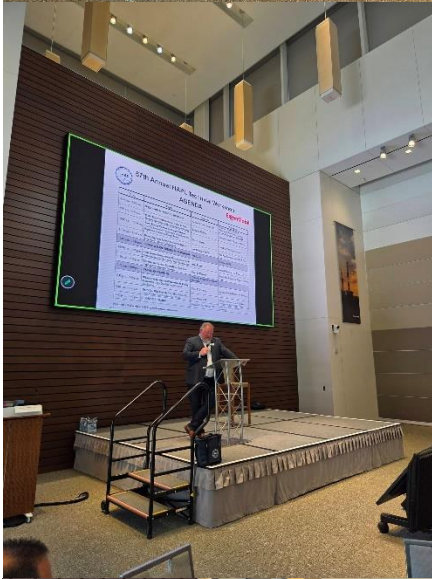
*Thank you & God Bless!*

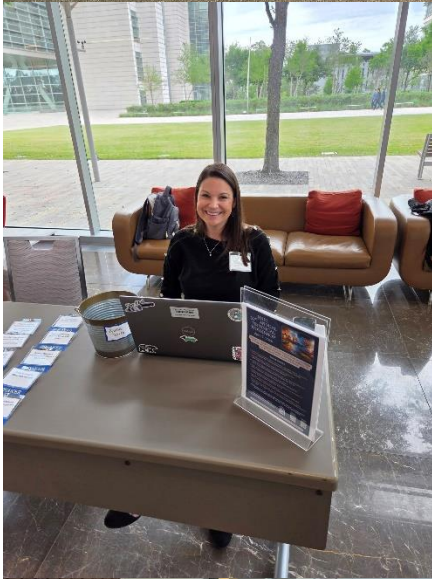
**Amanda L. Van Deusen, CPL**

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# Texas Business Court Dissects Farmout Agreement & Assignment

By Charles Sartain, Gray Reed

[Robert May et al v. Ineos USA Oil & Gas, LLC et al](#), could, if you are so inclined, serve as a tutorial on terms used in oil and gas transactions or, if you are further along than that, it could be your guide for negotiating and drafting farmouts.

The agreements between the plaintiffs/farmors and defendants/farmees were sui generis, so this result will not necessarily translate to other disputes. The significance of the decision is the Court's definition and application of common oil and gas terms. For example: "fee simple determinable", "possibility of reverter", "special limitation", "condition", "covenant" and "farmout agreement" (our self-imposed space limitations do not allow elaboration).

## The facts

Farmees drilled wells under the farmout agreement and farmors executed partial assignments of acreage, retaining a reversionary back-in interest in two leases. The back-in, which excluded assets earned by farmees, was effective at "Payout". The contractual trigger that could cause lease termination and reversion of undrilled acreage was the cessation of continuous drilling operations.

## The issues

After being sued by the farmors, defendant/farmees sought summary judgment raising these questions:

- Did the contracts convey the leases up-front or merely grant a right to earn property?
- Which events could trigger lease termination?
- Were farmees' contractual obligations covenants or conditions?
- What method would be used to calculate payout?

## Assignment or agreement to assign?

The Court explained that when a farmout agreement requires compliance with conditions before the assignment occurs, the farmout is an "agreement to transfer" after performance. In contrast, a conditional assignment is created when the contract assigns interests that vest immediately, subject to later divestment. Parties are free to do it either way.

The transaction was a conditional assignment of a vested fee simple determinable, immediately conveying the leases to farmee/defendants. There was granting language and a specific effective date. It was not a "drill to earn" arrangement. Immediately upon assignment. Defendants held an immediate, fixed right of present or future enjoyment of the interest conveyed. A carveout for "assets earned" was drafted as an exception to the farmors' reversionary interest, not an exception to the assignment.

## Retained acreage clause – a covenant, a condition, a special limitation?

Breach of a condition results in automatic termination of the leasehold estate upon the happening of stipulated events. Breach of a covenant subjects a breaching party to liability for monetary damages or, in extraordinary circumstances, the remedy of a conditional decree of cancellation.

Both a special limitation and a condition call for termination. A retained acreage provision can impose a special limitation on a general grant of interests only if the language is so clear, precise and unequivocal that a court can reasonably give it no other meaning.

The earned acreage/retained acreage language operated as a special limitation on defendants' estate. Upon cessation of continuous drilling operations farmees' interests in the leases automatically terminates as to acreage not retained or "earned". This is not a forfeiture and does not require breach or default.

## Payout

Under the language of these contracts a well drilled on acreage that had already been earned would not be an "Earning Well" and could not trigger Payout. In arriving at this conclusion, the Court construed the unambiguous terms of the operative provisions of contracts and declined to consider contract recitals.

## Parol evidence rejected

The Court denied plaintiffs' tender of extrinsic evidence, in particular on how the parties interpreted the contracts and the course of performance after execution. A court cannot consider course of performance evidence to interpret an unambiguous contract. Partial summary judgment granted for defendants.

## Unresolved issues

See Opinion p. 6 for questions that were left for another day.

## About the Author

Charles Sartain, Partner – Dallas

[Charles Sartain - Gray Reed](#)





# HAPL SUMMER SOCIAL

**“BRIDGING THE GAP”**

The “Bridging the Gap” idea highlights the inclusive nature of the event, inviting Landmen of all ages, experiences, and backgrounds to come together for networking and good times.

Summer interns and potential new HAPL members are invited as well!



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**We are also honored to share that HAPL will be receiving an award!**

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**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29<sup>TH</sup>, 2026**

**Hotel Zaza, Houston Museum District**

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The HAPL Executive Night Committee is pleased to announce

## **Mr. Ken Waits**

**as the featured speaker for the 70<sup>th</sup> HAPL Executive Night!**



President and CEO of Mewbourne Oil Company Ken Waits received his Bachelor of Science degree in Petroleum Engineering from the University of Oklahoma. Headquartered in Tyler, Texas, Mewbourne is one of the largest privately-owned oil producers in America and one of the most active drillers in the country, public or private, operating in the Anadarko and Permian Basins.. With a 60-year record of remarkable growth in a volatile industry, Mewbourne has a well-deserved reputation as a stable and respected operator in the industry. Mr. Waits will offer valuable insights drawn from his experience across the energy sector.

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