



2023
YEAR IN REVIEW

INTRODUCTION



Spindletop gushed in 1901, and ushered an era that launched Texas into a bold new direction. Our state is now synonymous with the energy industry, and for good reason: Texas is the leading producer of oil and gas in the nation, which not only benefits Texas residents and the state's booming economy, but our nation's energy independence as well.

In the early days of the Texas oil boom drilling was messy and the Railroad Commission stepped in to create and enforce rules to protect the public and the environment. Our track record of protecting the environment has been going on for **more than 100 years and counting!** It's a timeline that includes regulation on spacing of oil field wells, odorization of natural gas, oversight of propane storage,

orphaned well plugging, and regulation of surface mining and reclamation of mined lands, to name just a few of the important tasks in the agency's realm.

In 2023 we continued that very important work as more people flock to Texas. Our 2023 Year in Review highlights achievements, new programs, our commitment to increasing outreach to the public and operators, and our concerns about overreach by multiple federal agencies that could affect the vitality of our state's oil and gas industry. The agency once again was up to the challenge of high standards set by the Legislature by meeting or exceeding critical performance measures in areas such as orphaned well plugging and pipeline safety inspections.

You'll read about our well plugging expertise being key to a project in East Texas where we helped the National Park Service, how the state's flaring rate continues its downward trend, and how RRC rules and inspections were vital in ensuring uninterrupted natural gas supply for electricity generation and heating during multiple weather emergencies in the last 12 months.

These are all stories that reflect the dedication of more than 1,000 RRC employees who work across our great state who are committed to serving Texas.

We begin with our three commissioners giving their thoughts on the past 12 months.



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“There’s a lot of national recognition for how well we’re doing with well plugging and the professionalism you see in our agency.”

CHAIRMAN

Christi Craddick





“Oil, gas and coal are 80% of world energy, and the replacement they keep suggesting to us is unreliable energy.”

COMMISSIONER

Wayne Christian



“It just makes me so proud to be able to work with people like we have here today”

COMMISSIONER

Jim Wright

RRC ELIMINATES BOATING HAZARDS AT BIG THICKET AND WINS PRESTIGIOUS AWARD

The Railroad Commission completed an important project last spring to help the National Park Service (NPS) ensure boater safety recently at the Big Thicket National Preserve in East Texas.

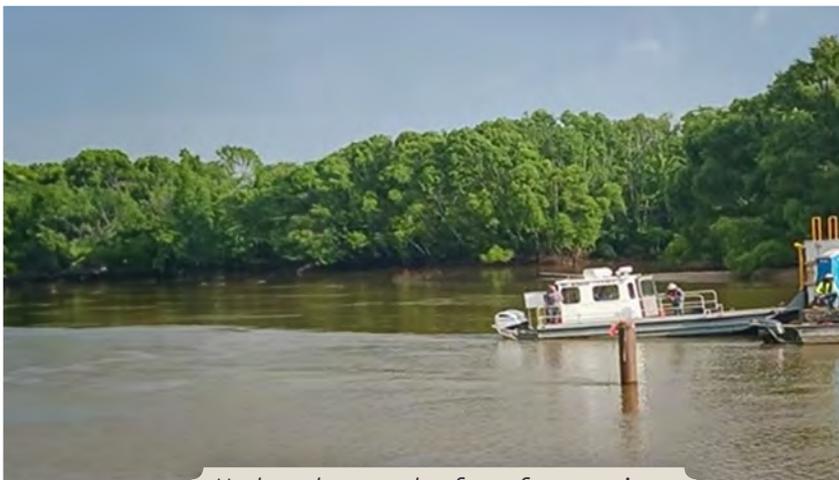
The project involved removing surface casings on four wells that had been properly plugged in the Neches River by operators in the 1970's and early 80's. The tall surface casings were starting to get exposed over the decades as river depths changed, posing a risk in recent years to boaters passing through the national preserve.

“The agency has had more than 40 years of extensive experience working with plugged wells and any issues that may crop up. We're glad to be able to lend our technical expertise for projects like this to help federal and state agencies when they reach out to us,” Clay

Woodul, RRC Assistant Director of the Oil and Gas Division for Field Operations.

The NPS contacted the RRC to oversee the project which took about two and a half months to complete. Contractors, including divers, worked in the water removing river debris and cutting the casings at the riverbed to get them removed.

The RRC won national accolades for the project, receiving the esteemed Chair's Environmental Partnership Award from the Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commission (IOGCC) this year. It was the second award the IOGCC has given the RRC for its well plugging work. The Commission received an award in 2021 for well plugging work at Padre Island National Seashore – a popular tourist destination on the Texas coast.



Work and removal of surface casings



Commissioner Jim Wright, Deputy Executive Director Danny Sorrells, Project Manager Keith May, and Executive Director Wei Wang with the IOGCC Award

RRC BECOMES FIRST STATE TO USE BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE LAW GRANTS TO COMPLETE ABANDONED MINE PROJECT

The Railroad Commission's Abandoned Mine Land (AML) program helps property owners around the state to reclaim and restore valuable land and water resources after mining.

The program began in 1977 and more than 100 projects have been completed. AML's work in various projects consists of earthwork, burial or treatment of unsuitable soil, and installation of erosion, water control structures, and revegetation. Abandoned, underground mine openings are usually closed by either backfilling, capping, or metal gating.

The RRC's extensive expertise working with abandoned mines helped Texas become the first state in the country to use federal grants from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to complete an abandoned mine reclamation.

AML staff worked quickly on a property in Bastrop to prevent an encroaching danger to a home. Every time a bad storm hit the area, an abandoned mine pit kept eroding and eventually would have led to the home caving in. The reclamation work included creating a channel to drain storm water off the property and planting native species to benefit wildlife.

The Commission worked with a company that employs current and former coal miners on the reclamation. The agency also took all steps necessary before the project began to ensure no environmental damage would occur.

"With the goal of leaving the subsidence feature and toad habitat, we worked with the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers on our wetland's determination and exclusion zone which ultimately deemed our project to have no impact," said Joe Parks, RRC Surface Mining and Reclamation Assistant Director. "AML also worked with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to review our programs best management practices."

Watch a video of the AML project and an interview with the property owner below.



EAST TEXAS OPERATOR RECEIVES RRC SURFACE MINING & RECLAMATION DIVISION'S 2023 TEXAS RECLAMATION AWARD



The Texas Municipal Power Agency (TMPA) is the latest recipient of the RRC's Texas Reclamation Award. The award recognizes the successful reclamation of the Pond SP-50 Islands Project at TMPA's Gibbons Creek Lignite Mine, vastly improving the land from its former natural state. Since its reclamation, the site has become a popular location for the Christmas Bird Count and aquatic wildlife.

Pond SP-50 Islands Project was originally built in 1994 for sediment control of a new area and mining began in 1995. Later that year, TMPA closed Gibbons Creek Lignite Mine and decided to import coal from another location and no mining occurred in the watershed of Pond SP-50.

In 2016, a decision was made to convert the waste piles left on the area into islands with wetland wildlife enhancement features. Channels were excavated to separate the waste piles from the banks of the pond, leaving them as islands. The soils of the waste piles were improved to create suitable plant growth material by liming, fertilizing, and deep aeration.

In 2018, TMPA planted grass and woody vegetation and used sprinklers to help the vegetation become established.

The project meets and exceeds the intended Post-Mining Land Use as it enhances the Developed Water Resources designation of the pond and provides an additional 12 acres of added environmental value in the form of wetlands and wildlife enhancement areas distributed over four islands.



RRC ADDS EVEN MORE PUBLIC INFORMATION ON WELLS PLUGGED WITH FEDERAL FUNDS

The RRC's award-winning well plugging program utilized federal grants to plug 730 wells around the state, and you can see all those well locations in an interactive map.

The data visualization allows users to choose what they see on the map, including which county to view, the fiscal year, and whether the wells have been plugged or have had a work order issued to be plugged.

The RRC received a \$25 million initial grant to plug abandoned oil and gas wells from the U.S. Department of the Interior in 2022, and has submitted an application this year to receive \$79.7 million in formula grants to plug even more wells.

The funds are part of the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which dedicated the funds to plug abandoned oil and gas wells.

Those would be in addition to wells plugged through the RRC's State Managed Plugging Program (SMP), whose target is 1,000 wells plugged for the fiscal year. The SMP utilizes revenue from the oil and gas industry including fees and fines.

"Thanks to our well-established well plugging program, we were able to hit the ground running to start plugging wells with the federal funds," said Clay Woodul, RRC Assistant Director of the Oil and Gas Division for Field Operations. "The data visualization allows anybody with access to the Internet to see our progress plugging wells with federal funds."

Texas began using federal funds to plug orphaned wells in October 2022 with projects in Refugio. You can get an up-close look at that work in this video



RRC'S NEW OIL & GAS MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT PLAN FOR 2024

Railroad Commission of Texas approved the Oil and Gas Monitoring Plan for Fiscal Year 2024 which will continue the agency's commitment to protecting Texans and the environment.

The plan consists of goals that explain the Commission's strategy to use oil and gas monitoring and enforcement resources to be more effective. It focuses on developing a framework to describe oil and gas monitoring and enforcement efforts, beyond inspections and remediations, and contain the extensive work involving technical permit monitoring and administrative compliance enforcement.

The RRC's well plugging program will continue its system of prioritization successfully plugging orphaned oil and gas wells throughout Texas with state funding. The agency used federal grants to add to the number of wells that were plugged in fiscal year 2023. The commission has submitted comments on the federal guidance draft on another set of grants that could be used in the next fiscal year.

Additional agency staff training has been another important initiative bringing technology that will further advance our experts in the oil and gas

industry. Inspectors will continue to receive in-house and external enrichment to learn about new tools that will be used in conventional and shale oil and gas field operations.

The Commission's recent goals include using data from inspections, enforcement, and compliance to enhance our information management systems to be easily accessible and improve efficiency for oil and gas operators, as well as agency staff.

"Our new plan expands on our previous goals to continue regulating the oil and gas industry with precision and efficiency, while keeping our environment safe," said Wei Wang, RRC Executive Director. "Texas continues to be the largest producer of oil and gas in the country, and we will continue to contribute to our state's successful economy."

[VIEW THE 2024 OIL & GAS MONITORING PLAN](#)

[VERSIÓN EN ESPAÑOL](#)



RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS

Fiscal Year
2024

**OIL & GAS
MONITORING AND
ENFORCEMENT PLAN**

★ WAYNE CHRISTIAN
COMMISSIONER

★ CHRISTI CRADDICK
CHAIRMAN

★ JIM WRIGHT
COMMISSIONER

NER



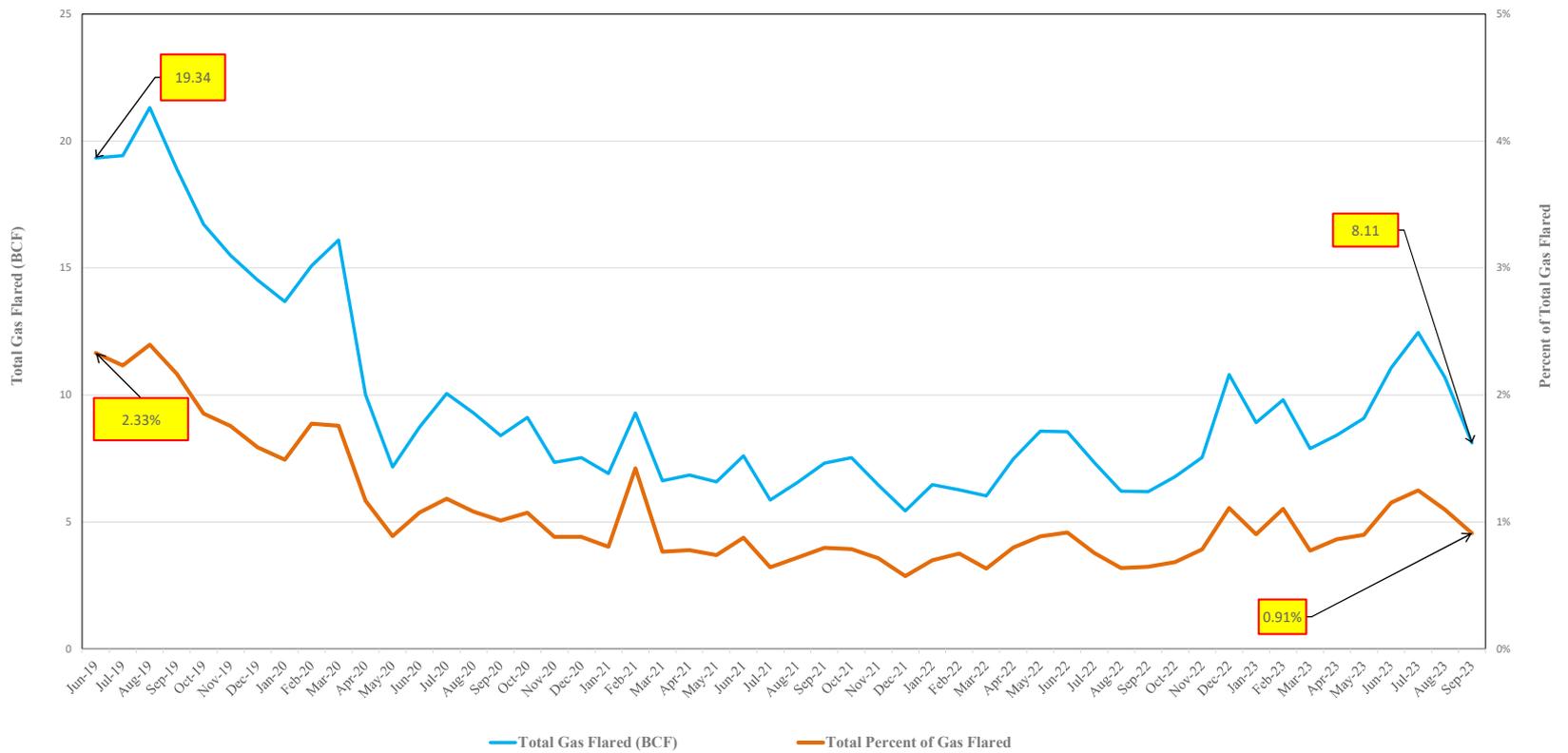
STATE'S FLARING RATE CONTINUES ITS DECLINE FROM THREE YEARS AGO

Over the course of the last several years the RRC has taken significant steps to address the often-discussed issue of flaring in the state. Those have included a revamped Form R-32, Application for Exception to Statewide Rule 32, which provides specific guidance on when an exception to flare would be permissible, under which circumstances, and for how long; and a revised Form PR, Monthly Production Report, which requires operators to report the amount of gas flared and the amount of gas vented as separate values on the monthly report instead of as a single value for an entire lease.

Along with those changes, the RRC has also been tracking the oil and gas industry's flaring rate (the percentage of gas flared compared to the amount of gas produced). The flaring rate in Texas has dropped significantly, by 61%, since June 2019. For the most recent month that data is available, September 2023, the flaring rate was less than 1%, meaning more than 99% of gas produced in Texas was being beneficially used. These stats are an indication of how the energy industry and the RRC have taken significant strides to help reduce the impact of flaring in Texas.



Flaring in Texas: June 2019 to September 2023



RRC TAKES ADDITIONAL STEPS TO GATHER VALUABLE DATA FOR SEISMICITY RESPONSE

In the fall of 2021, the RRC embarked on an important mission to mitigate earthquakes in West Texas to protect residents and the environment.

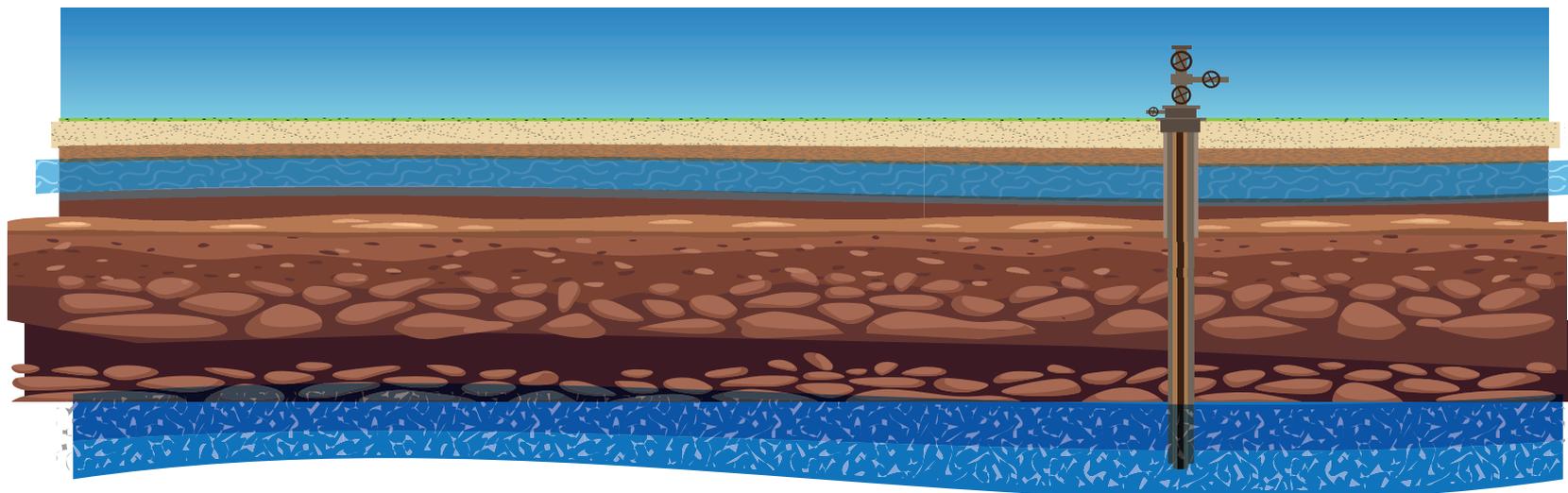
The RRC's seismicity response included creating seismic response areas (SRAs) where injection of produced water in saltwater disposal wells has been restricted to help reduce earthquakes in the region.

Another important aspect of the response has been gathering and monitoring seismicity data through state and operator monitoring networks. The more information we can track, the better.

The latest advancement in RRC's seismicity response has to do with getting additional data. New disposal wells that are drilled in West Texas

will be required to have bottom hole pressure monitoring gauges to collect important information such as injection pressures, fluid density and injection volumes. The permit requirement applies to all new deep disposal wells in the Permian Basin, and all new shallow disposal wells in the Permian Basin that are within an SRA.

This will allow gathering of more data that can be utilized by the RRC, operators and researchers to further help mitigate earthquakes. Because of the importance of the data, operators of existing wells are encouraged (but not required) to report the type of data that new permits would report; many operators of disposal wells in seismically active areas are already reporting this information.



NEW STATE BUDGET HELPS THE RRC CONTINUE SERVING TEXAS THROUGH IMPORTANT WORK

The new state budget was passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor in June to expand the Railroad Commission's work in regulating the oil and gas industry, while serving Texans.

The energy industry is vital to the economy in Texas and the Legislature's funding allows the Commission to continue its work in permitting, compliance and enforcement. The RRC has been consistent in meeting or exceeding annual performance goals set by the Legislature for the Commission's funding.

The bill provides the agency with approximately \$481 million for the next two fiscal years and includes new funding to enhance the RRC's work in public safety and environmental protection.



Important updates include:

- Hiring 50 new pipeline safety professionals to inspect gathering lines after new federal law this year requires additional oversight. The number of RRC regulated gathering lines has now increased more than seven times to about 45,000 miles.
- Funding for additional staff in the Oil and Gas Environmental Permits and Support Unit. The RRC has seen a significant workload increase over the last year following the enactment of legislation that encourages the recycling of fluid waste for beneficial purposes. New staff members will assist with the anticipated increase in carbon capture permitting applications if the EPA grants the RRC primacy to oversee carbon capture applications.
- Funding for additional FLIR cameras will increase inspection capabilities. The cameras have been used by the Commission for more than 10 years to detect emissions from wells and other oil and gas facilities during inspections.
- Funding for the digitization of records will help the commission continue its initiative of transparency with historical documents becoming more readily available. The RRC was budgeted \$1.9 million to create online access to about 5 million documents throughout district offices in the state for public access.

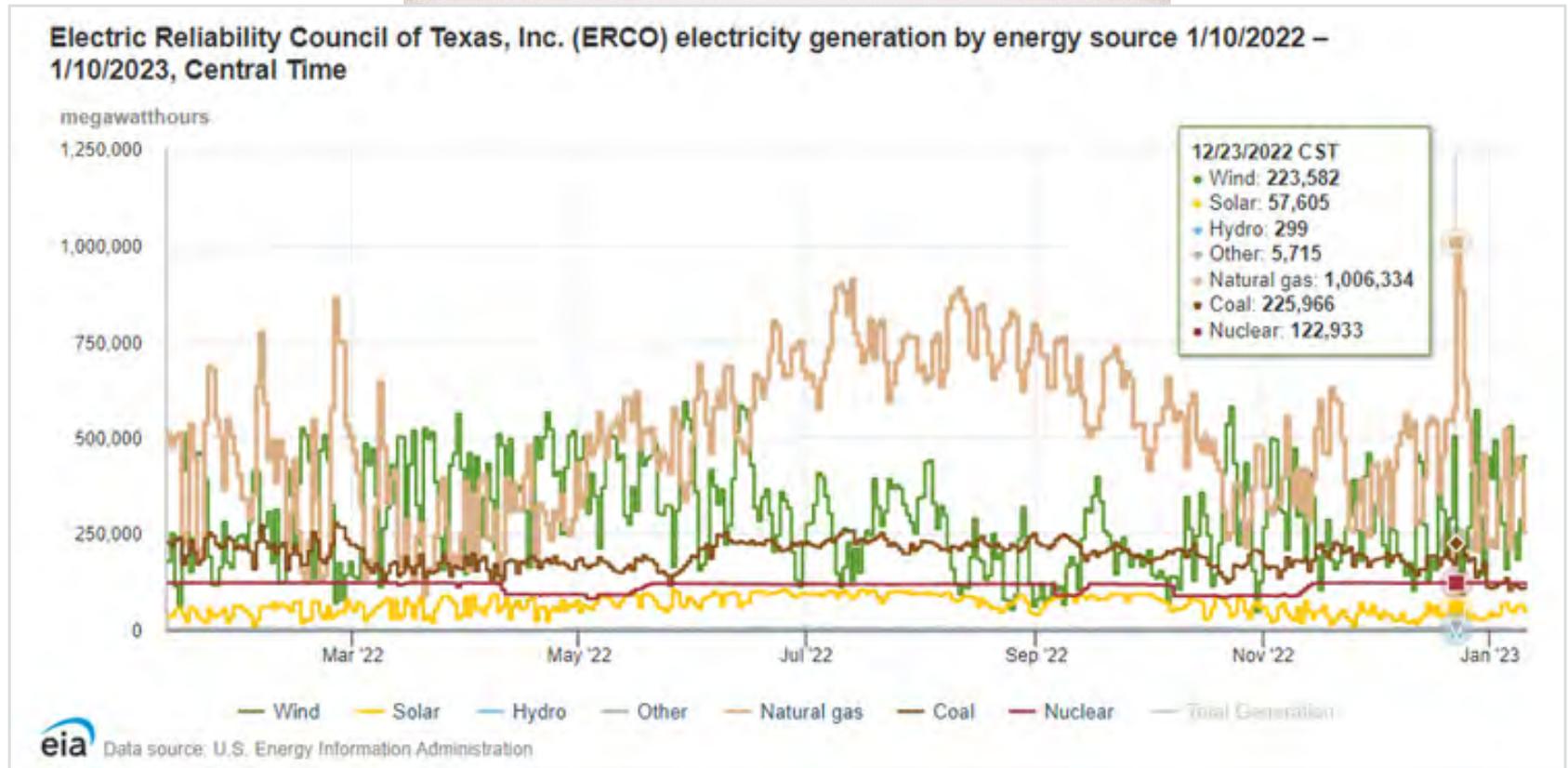


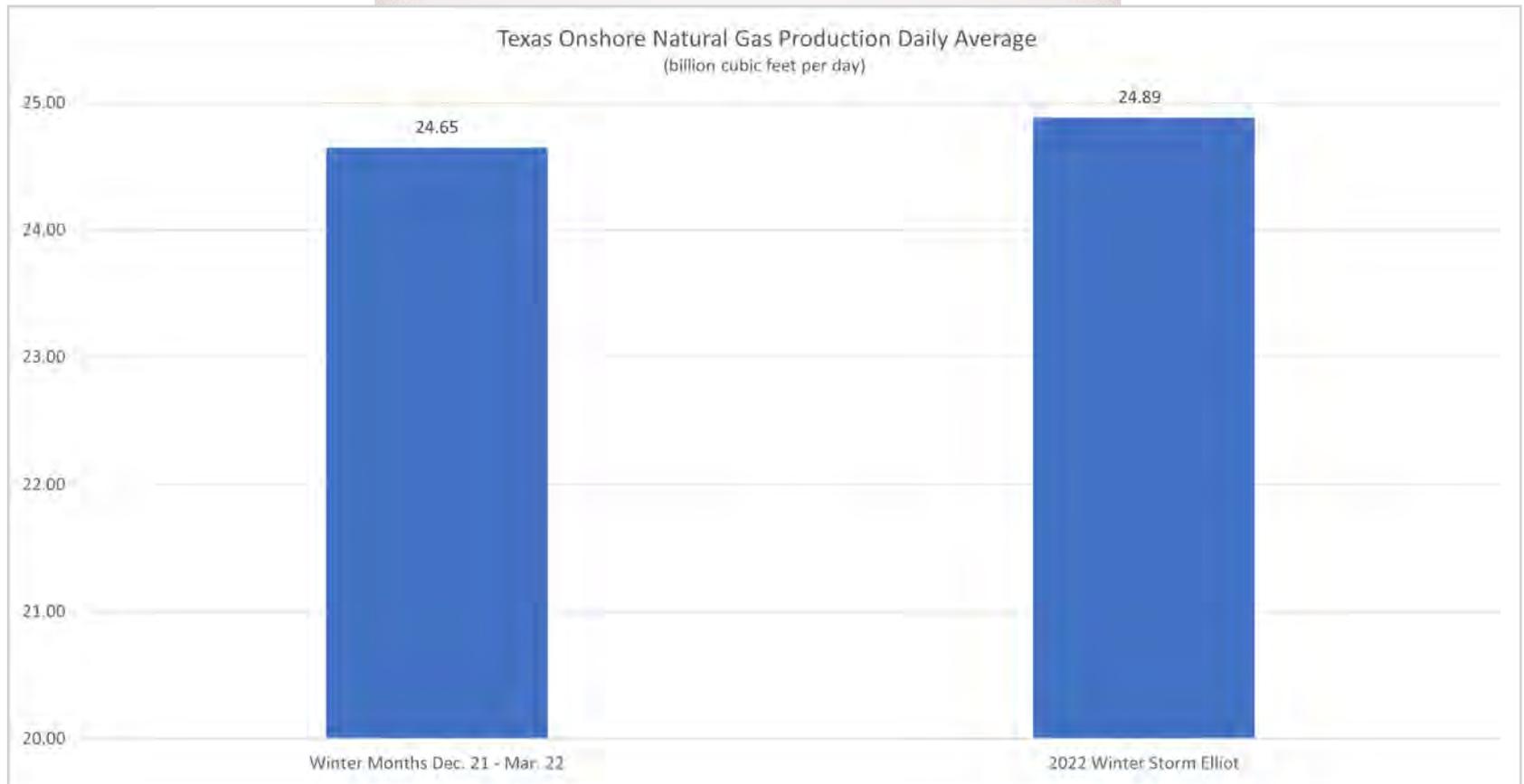
THE NUMBERS PROVE HOW RRC HELPED NATURAL GAS SUPPLY HOLD UP DURING WINTER STORM ELLIOTT

The RRC’s extensive efforts adopting and implementing weatherization and critical designation rules, and the agency’s robust inspection process were evident when severe storms hit Texas during the Winter 2022-23 season.

A freeze gripped many parts of Texas over the last Christmas break, and the state’s natural gas supply was protected to ensure gas was available for power generation during Winter Storm Elliott.

The chart below from the U.S. Energy Information Administration shows that December 23rd, during Elliott, marked the highest day of gas-fired generation in the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) for the entirety of 2022, even surpassing the peak days in the summer which is usually the state’s high power demand period.





More data that was released after the winter storm indicate how the agency and operators worked to make sure the natural gas supply held up.

Data from S&P Global Platts in the chart above shows the state’s natural gas production not only held up during Elliott, but exceeded daily production averages from the previous winter.

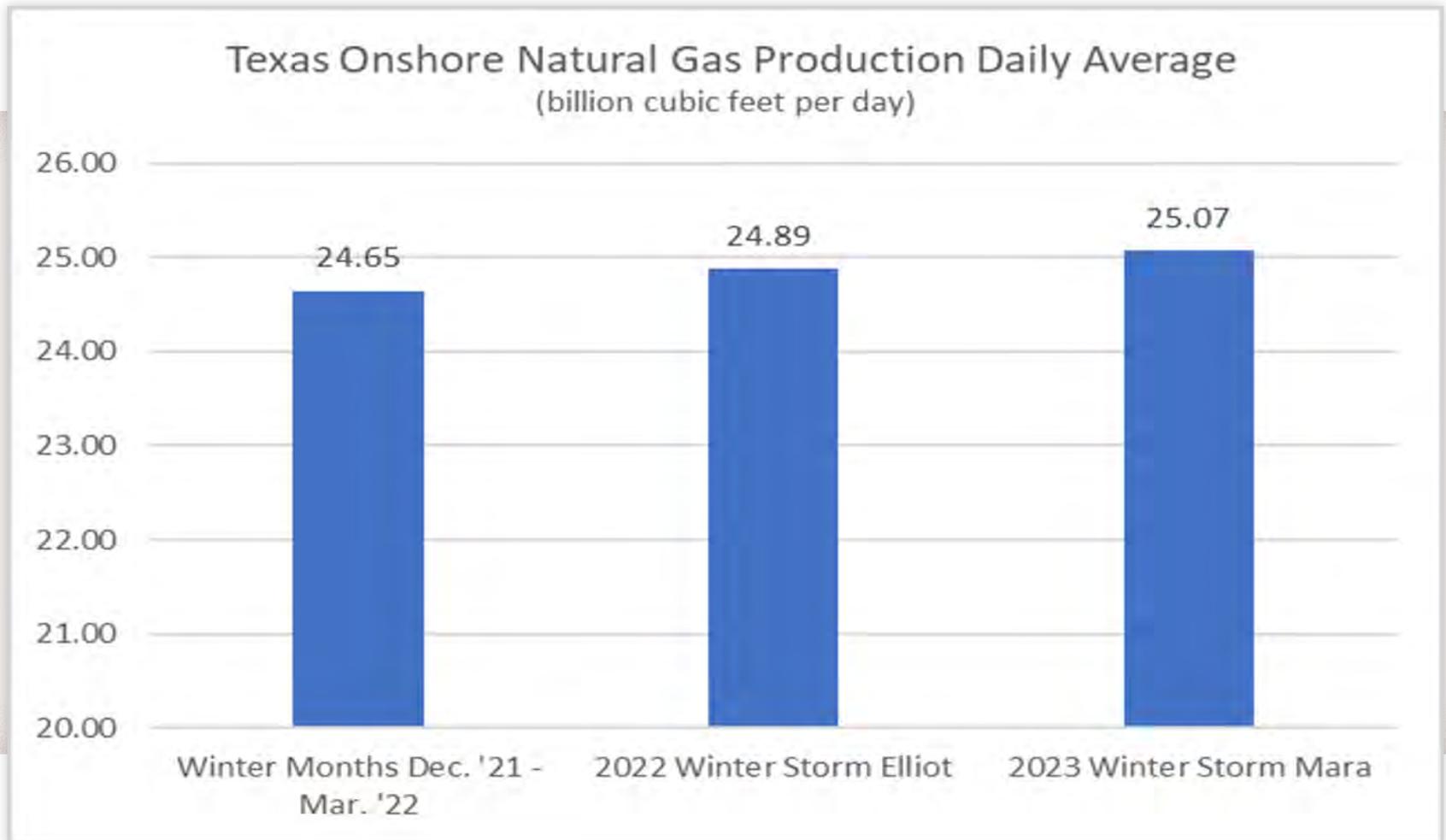
WINTER STORM MARA

About a month after Winter Storm Elliott, another storm struck Texas. This one was called Winter Storm Mara. And thanks to inspections and round-the-clock contact with operators, the RRC once again helped ensure there was ample natural gas supply needed to heat homes and keep lights on for millions of Texans.

Winter Storm Mara swept through Midland, the Dallas-Fort Worth area, and into San Antonio, covering several gas production basins in the state in late January/early February. The key elements of gas supply – production, pipeline transportation and underground storage – all performed up to par during the arctic blast.

Texas’ daily onshore gas production, for example, averaged more than 25 billion cubic feet (Bcf) per day from January 31 to February 2. As shown in the chart below, that exceeded the daily average seen during Winter Storm Elliott in late December, and the daily production gas production of all last winter.

The state’s underground storage facilities had an estimated 392.4 billion cubic feet (Bcf) of natural gas as of January 2023. In addition, pipeline operators packed the pipeline system with natural gas ahead of the storm.



All told, there was more than enough gas to meet the demand during Mara. According to data from S&P Global natural gas demand for residential and commercial heating peaked at 4.23 Bcf and demand for electricity generation peaked at an estimated 6.46 Bcf for power generation, both on January 31.

The natural gas supply chain’s performance was similar during Mara as it was during Winter Storm Elliott in December 2022.

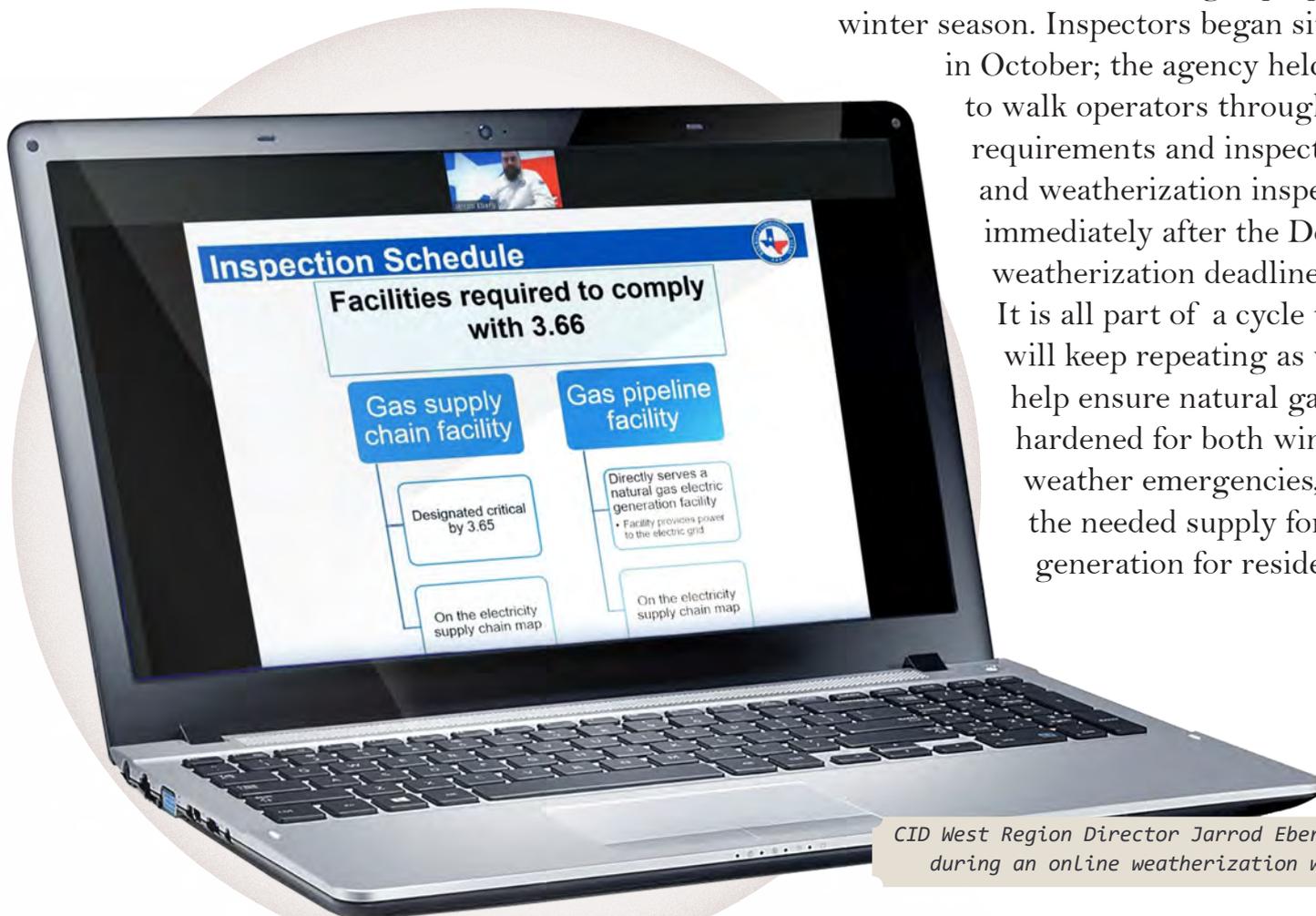


SUMMER AND FALL 2023

RRC inspections of weatherization is not simply limited to cold weather. RRC's inspections of critical facilities were crucial during the summer when Texas went through days upon days of extremely high temperatures which led to spikes in consumer demand for electricity as residents cranked up the AC. Thanks to the agency's diligence with inspections of summer operations, there were no disruptions in the supply of natural gas to electricity power generation facilities.

Summer preparations included joining the Texas Division of Emergency Management and several other state agencies to plan for hurricane season in a full-scale simulation. The simulation included 40 separate exercise sites participating to strengthen capabilities, plans, and procedures to foster cross agency response to severe storms.

Following the summer season, the Critical Infrastructure Division began preparations for the winter season. Inspectors began site verifications in October; the agency held webinars to walk operators through reporting requirements and inspection processes; and weatherization inspections began immediately after the December 1 weatherization deadlines for facilities. It is all part of a cycle that the RRC will keep repeating as we work to help ensure natural gas facilities are hardened for both winter and summer weather emergencies, and provide the needed supply for electricity generation for residents.



CID West Region Director Jarrod Eberly speaks during an online weatherization webinar



NEW LAYERS ADDED TO TEXAS ELECTRICITY SUPPLY CHAIN MAP

The Texas Electricity Supply Chain Map now includes more information that will assist state emergency officials in preparing for, responding to and recovering from weather emergencies or other disasters.

The map was created in April 2022, and has successfully been used by state emergency officials during weather emergencies including severe storms last winter season. It's a crucial tool used by the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC), the Railroad Commission (RRC), and state emergency responders to respond to issues in real-time through direct communication and movement of resources necessary for maintenance or repair of electric generation and transmission infrastructure during an emergency.

The map identifies critical infrastructure facilities that are in the state's electricity supply chain, including electric generation plants and the natural gas facilities that supply fuel to power the generation plants. New layers of information added include water and wastewater treatment plants, and the roads that provide access to all the facilities on the map.

The map has:

- More than 12,746 facilities including electricity generation plants powered by natural gas, electric substations, natural gas processing plants, underground gas storage facilities, oil and gas well leases, saltwater disposal wells;
- More than 21,000 miles of gas transmission pipelines and approximately 60,000 miles of electric transmission lines;
- Approximately 13,000 water and wastewater treatment plants;
- A basemap layer of Texas Department of Transportation roads

“The Texas Electricity Supply Chain Map is a critical tool for the PUC and emergency responders across the state,” said Thomas Gleason, PUC Executive Director. “These updates and additional map layers will further strengthen our ability to maintain the reliability of critical infrastructure, respond to incidents during emergencies, and keep Texans safe. I thank the Mapping Committee and state agency partners for their collaboration on this effort.”

“The map is one of many steps we take to help ensure residents’ safety during weather emergencies,” said Wei Wang, RRC Executive Director. “The RRC has already begun inspections to ensure natural gas facilities are weatherized and fortified for the winter, similar to last winter. This supply chain map is the first of its kind in the nation and has proven to be a valuable tool for emergency management personnel to triage, respond, and collaborate real-time during emergencies. It’s all part of the extensive work state agencies undertake in our mission to protect Texans.”

The map also includes elements such as Texas Division of Emergency Management regions, emergency contact information for facilities, and weather watches and warnings as they occur in any part of the state. The map is updated with critical infrastructure at least twice a year.

Senate Bill 3 passed by the 87th Texas Legislature required the PUCT and RRC to create the map. New information such as roads and water plants were added through provisions in Senate Bill 1093 passed by the 88th Legislature this year.

Legislation prohibits public release of the map and corresponding data to protect the safety and integrity of the electricity supply chain.

The map is overseen by the Texas Electricity Supply Chain Security and Mapping Committee, which is comprised of the Public Utility Commission, the Railroad Commission, the Electric Reliability Council of Texas, the Texas Division of Emergency Management, and the Texas Department of Transportation.

The committee will hold a public meeting on January 25, 2024, which will be livestreamed for the public.

WATCH THE PUBLIC MEETING LIVESTREAM



From the Railroad Commission and the Public Utility Commission of Texas



RRC ANNOUNCES JOE PARKS AS THE NEW DIRECTOR OF THE SURFACE MINING AND RECLAMATION DIVISION

The Railroad Commission is proud to announce Joe Parks as the new Director of the Surface Mining and Reclamation Division (SMRD). Parks first joined the Commission in October 2016 as an Engineering Specialist and he was the Assistant Director for SMRD prior to becoming Director.

SMRD oversees coal exploration, mining, and mine reclamation in Texas to ensure operators follow Commission rules and regulations established to protect public safety and natural resources.

“I began my career in the mining industry in 1983 working on one of the first RRC lignite mining permits submittals. I feel I have come full circle within the Texas mining industry with an understanding in both the regulatory and operational aspects of the industry,” said Parks.

Parks previously held positions such as plant manager, environmental supervisor, and technician at various mining operations, as well as being an Adjunct Instructor at Navarro College.

He holds a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Technology with a minor in General Business from Sam Houston State University. He also attended the University of Texas at Austin where he studied at the McCombs School of Business in Executive Education and Leadership.



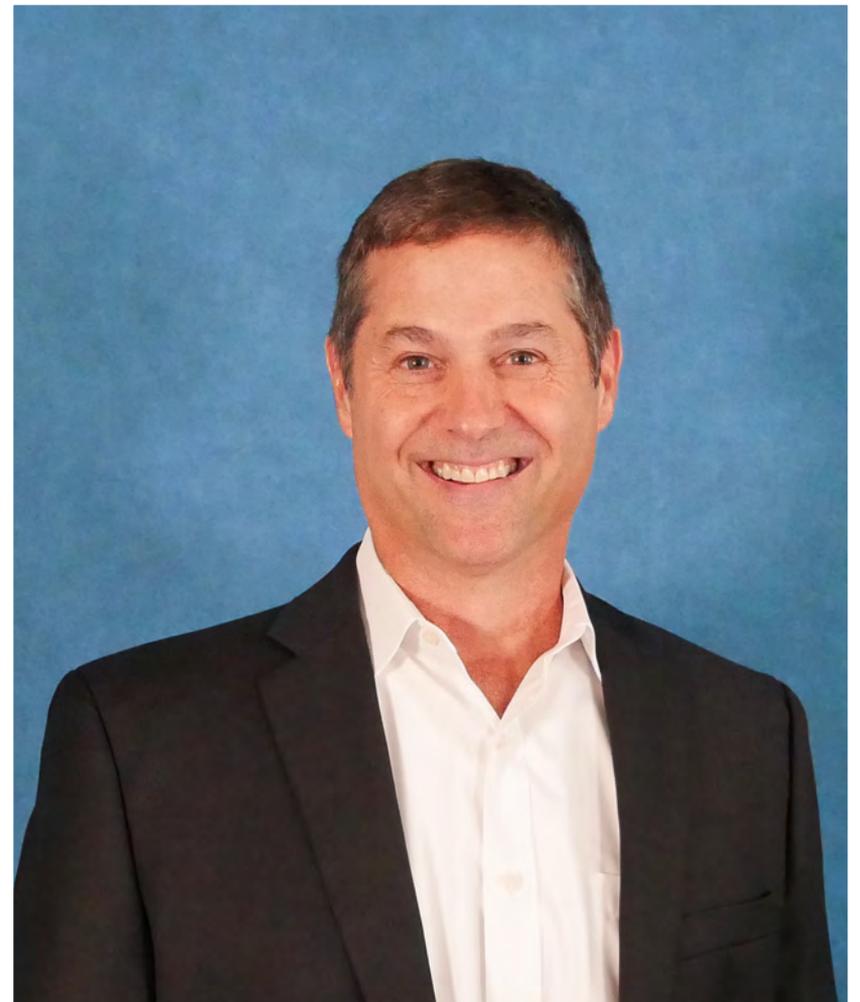
RRC ANNOUNCES RAY YOUNG AS NEW CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

The Railroad Commission is excited to announce that Ray Young has been selected as the Chief Information Officer/Director of the Information Technology Services Division. Ray joined the RRC in 2013 leading software development activities. In the past 10 years with the RRC, he has led Technology Governance, Information Security, Vendor Sourcing, and was most recently the Chief Technology Officer.

Before coming to the agency, Ray held various technology positions at the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and IBM implementing and maintaining technology hardware, systems, and software for more than 20 years. His wealth of experience will build on past momentum to drive adoption of innovative technology solutions helping RRC to achieve its mission.

“I’ll continue to focus on the agency’s major modernization and mainframe transformation projects while investigating how we can leverage AI tools to perform agency tasks faster, cheaper and maintain the high quality that RRC is known for,” said Young.

He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science from the University of Texas. He is also a graduating member of the agency’s inaugural Wisdom Program and earned both Managerial and Executive Leadership Certifications from the McCombs School of Business at the University of Texas.



OIL & GAS DIVISION NAMES NEW DIRECTOR FOR KILGORE OFFICE

The Railroad Commission is excited to announce Stephen Smith as the new Director for the Oil and Gas District 05/06 in Kilgore.

Stephen began his career at the RRC in November 2011 as a State Managed Plugging inspector in the Kilgore District Office. He was promoted to Lead Plugger for the Kilgore office in November 2017. Most recently, Stephen has served as the Assistant District Director for District 05/06 since December 2018. Prior to joining the agency, he was a work-over supervisor for Peak Energy. Stephen has a bachelor's degree in business management from the University of Texas at Tyler.

“I am very excited and honored to go to work in my new role as District Director and I’m ready to bring Kilgore into a new era of leadership,” said Smith.

Stephen spends his time away from work traveling with his wife, bass fishing with his dad, watching Texas Rangers baseball or having cookouts with friends and family.



NEW OIL AND GAS DIVISION SECTION TO ENHANCE CUSTOMER SERVICE FOR OPERATORS

The RRC constantly looks for ways to improve efficiency for both staff and operators to help save time and money in conducting important business. Oftentimes, the agency achieves efficiency by leveraging technological improvements.

It could also be done through staffing shifts at the agency. One recent example is the creation of the Production/API Research Section in the RRC's Oil and Gas Division.

That section was created by merging the Production Audit Unit and Well Mapping Section, for a larger pool of cross trained staff to collaborate and keep up with workflows.

The new Production/API Research section is in the Administrative Compliance department which issues organization reports and accepts operator financial assurance, reviews permit applications and issues drilling permits for oil and natural gas wells and waste haulers, collects and maintains production and well completion reports, well maps and other RRC required forms.

“This merger will create a larger pool of cross-trained staff to ensure processing times are current while providing enhanced customer service,” said Joe Stasulli, Assistant Oil and Gas Director for Administrative Compliance. “I’m excited about this opportunity to gain efficiency and expand staff knowledge.”

The new section will continue to coordinate with the Information Technology Services Division’s GIS group on mapping and agency’s geographic information systems.

“We will see a synergy that will be beneficial to both groups”, said Lorenzo Garza, Deputy Assistant Oil and Gas Director for Administrative Compliance. “We will have more back up and the ability to train more people to work in the group.”



ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL RRC REGULATORY CONFERENCE IN THE BOOKS

The Railroad Commission hosted the 2023 Regulatory Conference from July 31 – August 2 in Austin to inform and train oil, gas, pipeline operators, and other industry representatives on the laws, rules, and procedures to produce hydrocarbon in Texas.

Close to 700 people attended the conference. The three-day event featured Legislative updates, pipeline safety updates, critical infrastructure changes, information on carbon sequestration and the RRC's primacy application to the EPA, and much more.

There were more than 50 sessions at this year's conference and attendees had time to ask questions at the end of each session with RRC staff experts.

Each year, the conference is a great opportunity for attendees to participate in workshops, learn about important upcoming regulatory changes, and network with fellow industry professionals.

New at this year's conference was the chance to attend a variety of sessions, instead of through a single track, varying the information all attendees could gather and get questions answered on important industry topics. This was also the first year the event featured exhibitors, and 21 exhibitors attended the conference including RRC's own Brownfields Response Program, and Human Resources Division.



Guest Speaker Dewitt Burdeaux of RCP presenting Potential Impact of the Gas Pipeline Leak Detection and Repair NPRM



*Listening to Keynote Speaker
Robert Clarke*



TEXAS FILES COMMENTS ON FEDERAL EMISSIONS RULES

The Railroad Commission of Texas joined the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) in filing comments in February on the Environment Protection Agency's (EPA) [proposed supplemental rule](#) to regulate methane and greenhouse gas emissions in the oil and gas industry.

In the comments, the state expresses concerns that the proposed rule exceeds EPA's statutory authority under the Clean Air Act and will significantly limit domestic energy supply. At a time of energy fluctuations due to international conflict, the United States cannot afford to clamp down on its most important oil and gas producing state.

Texas also commented that the proposal also lays out unrealistic assumptions and artificially high metrics to estimate the climate benefits of the rule, whereas in practice, the rule would place an unjustifiable burden on states and the energy industry for little real benefit to the global climate.

In addition, the RRC is concerned that EPA did not provide sufficient time for affected stakeholders to review and comment on the extreme breadth of its proposal. The proposed rule was published immediately before the holiday season, on December 6, 2022, amidst several other significant regulatory proposals. Despite receiving numerous requests to extend the comment period, EPA declined to provide additional time.

"The EPA's overreaching methane rules and unrealistic timeline are yet another example of the Biden administration's attempt to shut down the oil and gas industry in Texas," said RRC Chairman Christi Craddick. "I stand with my fellow Railroad Commissioners and partners at the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality in opposition to this attack on the industry that provides so much to our state."

"President Biden's EPA continues its relentless fight to shut down oil and gas. The EPA's proposed rule on methane will make reliable energy scarcer and more expensive at a time when we desperately need more of it," said RRC Commissioner Wayne Christian. "From killing the Keystone XL pipeline project, to freezing federal leasing, to supporting ESG, to implementing onerous regulations, Biden is why energy is so expensive. An unburdened and unleashed Texas oil and gas industry is the path to energy security. We only need the administration to get out of the way! If the EPA moves forward, it's imperative that Texas and other states challenge them in the court and those rules get thrown out."

"The EPA methane rule is yet another example of the Biden Administration saying one thing and doing another," said RRC Commissioner

RRC RESPONDS TO MORE RESTRICTIVE EPA ACTIONS

Jim Wright. “In his State of the Union remarks, President Biden placed special emphasis on the need to increase domestic manufacturing, lower utility bills, and create American jobs. Unfortunately, the EPA’s methane rule will have the opposite effect. Not only does this rule threaten Texas energy production, it does so by disproportionately impacting small and medium producers who live and work in their community, buy supplies, hire locally, and are important contributors to their local economies.”

READ THE JOINT COMMENTS BY RRC & TCEQ



In February, RRC Commissioners also unanimously voted to refer two actions by EPA to the Texas Attorney General to challenge their validity.

In 2018 the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality submitted the state’s robust Interstate Transport State Implementation Plan (SIP) for National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ozone – a plan to ensure that emissions within the state would comply with the “good neighbor” provisions of the Clean Air Act and not affect air quality in other states. The EPA disapproved the plan in February 2023, but not before proposing a federal implementation plan (FIP) plan almost a full year prior to disapproving the state plan.

The RRC is concerned that the EPA was ready to ignore the state’s expertise on regional factors, and circumvented procedures in the Clean Air Act by proposing a federal plan before its final disapproval of the SIP.

Not only that, but the proposed FIP also introduces restrictive emissions standards for stationary engines that are used in the pipeline transportation of natural gas. As the state’s oil and gas regulator, the RRC is concerned about how the proposal could hinder an energy industry that contributes significantly to the Texas economy and the state budget.

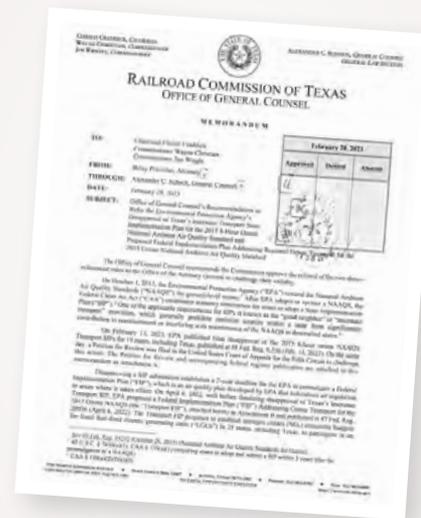
“When the federal government oversteps in the business of Texas, it is our responsibility to push back”
 said RRC Chairman Christi Craddick.

“When the federal government oversteps in the business of Texas, it is our responsibility to push back,” said RRC Chairman Christi Craddick. “This federal administration has yet again proven that they do not value the profoundly beneficial impact of the oil and gas industry in Texas, and this vote is the first step for the Railroad Commission of Texas in fighting back against unreasonable and unjust attempts to harm this state.”

“The Biden Administration is pulling every pseudo-environmental lever they can to shut down oil and gas production – especially in Texas – where it’s cheap, plentiful, and responsibly produced,” said Commissioner Wayne Christian. “Biden’s EPA first tried it in the Permian Basin last year through non-attainment, with faulty emissions reports, to no success. Now they are trying it through an overreaching, one-size-fits-all approach with their regional haze rule. Contrary to popular belief, fossil fuel usage and a clean environment are not mutually exclusive; in fact, according to the EPA themselves major pollutants are down 78% in the last fifty years alongside increased fossil fuel consumption. I hope the Texas Attorney General will fight this onerous proposal and return the rights back to states and local officials, who know best how to take care of their own land and air.”

“There is a disturbing trend emerging from the Biden Administration with respect to blatant federal overreach and repeated attempts to undermine the authority and sovereignty of our state,” said Commissioner Jim Wright. “Texas has a long and proud history of protecting our natural resources and our environment and is more than capable of acting in the best interest of our citizens without Washington bureaucrats looking over our shoulder.”

READ THE COMMISSION'S ORDER



PROPOSED CHANGES TO REGULATIONS GOVERNING STATE PLANS FOR EXISTING SOURCES

The RRC joined the TCEQ and the Public Utility Commission in commenting on the EPA's proposed changes to its regulations governing the timelines and other requirements for state plans that regulate existing sources under section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act.

These regulations, known as the “Implementing Regulations,” apply to states that must submit plans for sources covered by specific Emissions Guidelines set by EPA. Emissions Guidelines establish procedures for states to follow as they develop plans that establish, implement, and enforce performance standards for “designated facilities” (which is the term EPA uses for existing sources).

EPA has used this provision to advance controversial climate regulations, including the Clean Power Plan, the Affordable Clean Energy Rule, and its recently proposed Supplemental Methane Rule.

The proposed changes to EPA's Implementing Regulations shorten the time states would have to submit a plan from three years to 15 months.

One of the major concerns is that this change would not provide Texas with adequate time to develop a state plan and establish the appropriate regulatory

framework – especially for regulations like the Methane Rule that would apply to tens of thousands of oil and gas sources across the state. That in turn could force states with large numbers of affected sources, like Texas, to adopt federal model rules. As mentioned earlier, Texas has expertise on regional factors, and is in the best position to define clear paths to help regulate emissions.



[READ THE JOINT COMMENTS SUBMITTED BY THE THREE AGENCIES](#)

RELIABLE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY THREATENED BY EPA PROPOSED RULES

The RRC submitted joint comments along with the TCEQ opposing the EPA's proposal to add requirements to electric generating units in an effort to reduce carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions.

The comments highlighted inaccurate assumptions the EPA used to estimate the climate benefits of the rule. It would also inflict high costs, not including the infrastructure required to get the proposed mandates in place, and still risk the fuel needed for the electric grid.

This rule could cause coal and natural gas fired power plants to soon become scarce, even though they are vital in supplying electricity in an ever-growing state like Texas.

"The EPA continues to undermine the needs of Americans," said RRC Chairman Christi Craddick. "The latest proposed rule is unrealistic and potentially dangerous as it reduces or eliminates access to electricity for consumers. During extreme heat waves, like we are currently experiencing in Texas, and extreme cold snaps, access to power from natural gas and coal is critical for survival. I am proud to join with TCEQ and push back against these outrageous proposed regulations."

"President Biden's obsession with 'net-zero' is propping up unreliable energy sources that only make our electric grids unstable and leave consumers with

higher energy costs," said Commissioner Wayne Christian. "In May, the Public Utilities Commission of Texas and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission warned that the retirement of thermal-based energies is leaving our grids extremely vulnerable to power blackouts, and this decision will only lead to less investment in those sources and less reliable energy on our grids."

"Our state and our nation are at a crossroads when it comes to the future reliability of the electric grid. Unfortunately, the EPA's proposed rule will send us further down the path of less dependability and higher consumer costs," said Commissioner Jim Wright. "Since 2000, the population of Texas has increased by 43% and our economy has grown by 88%, yet we've added only 18% more dispatchable generation to our electric grid. The EPA's short-sided approach will only serve to further disincentivize investment in reliable electric generation and reduce our ability to provide electricity when it is needed most."

In early 2024, the EPA is expected to provide a final ruling.

[READ THE JOINT COMMENTS SUBMITTED BY RRC AND TCEQ](#)

PROPOSED EXPANSION OF RICE'S WHALE CRITICAL HABITAT COULD CREATE AN ALARMING EFFECT ON GULF COAST ECONOMY

Towards the latter part of the year, the RRC submitted comments in response to the National Marine Fisheries Service (Service) proposal to designate a huge swath of waters in the Gulf of Mexico - approximately 28,270 square miles - as expanded critical habitat for the Rice's whale without sufficient data. The zealous proposal may lead to major limitations when transporting oil and gas products, which in turn would have an alarming and negative effect on the economy of Texas.

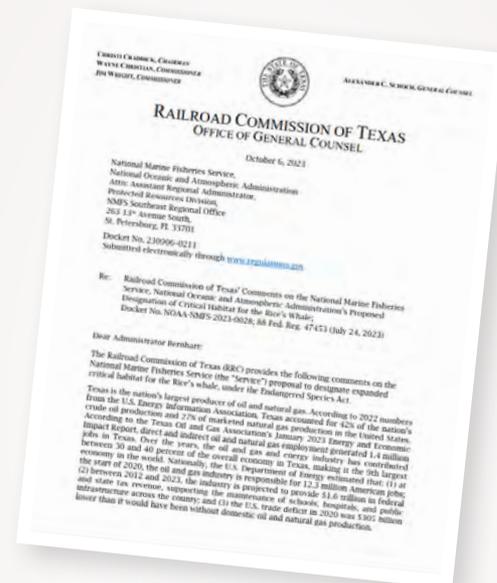
The Gulf Coast is vital to Texas being the leading state for energy exports, including liquefied natural gas (LNG), natural gas liquids (NGLs), crude oil, as well as petroleum and coal product exports. A study by American Petroleum Institute found that increased exports of LNG could support between 220,000 and 452,000 more jobs for the U.S. labor market and add up to \$73 billion to the U.S. economy by 2040.

Restricting energy activity in the Gulf of Mexico will impact the supply of crude oil, petroleum products, and liquified natural gas when there's no scientific evidence to support a vast habitat that spans from Texas to Florida, as the Service is proposing. Without a solid foundation of scientific, fully peer-reviewed data, and observations, the

current proposal raises serious concerns that the Service does not have adequate scientific evidence to base its proposed designation.

The RRC acknowledges that conservation of the environment and biodiversity are important issues; however, a proposal to designate such an expansive area as critical habitat with serious ramifications requires more scientific proof and reasonable consideration.

READ THE FULL COMMENT LETTER



INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

IT Modernization

ITS continued with the third phase of the Inspection Enforcement and Tracking System (IETRS) modernization efforts. ITS partnered with the Alternative Fuels Safety division to implement the Alternative Fuels Online System (AFOS) Phase 1. This project was the first to implement the agency's new data governance standards and requirements. With the assistance of the Data Management team, the project team used the new standards and requirements to classify the data used in the application. AFOS Phase 1 allows authenticated users to complete registrations for course and exam events and sends an email confirmation to registrants. The system also generates reports. In April 2023, the AFOS Phase 1 system went live.

The Mainframe Transformation Team made substantial progress in reaching our goal of eliminating the agency's dependence on the mainframe. The team removed significant portions of the mainframe processes. So far this year, the team has decommissioned mainframe programs and data associated with Subscriptions, Central Records, LP Gas Dockets, Docketed Hearings, Attorney General, and Gas Utility Dockets as we moved these functions to newer platforms such as Salesforce, Data Warehouse and LoneSTAR (Risk Based Database Management System/RBDMS).

Critical Infrastructure Systems

In November 2022, ITS implemented the Critical Infrastructure Inspection System (CIIS) to allow Critical Infrastructure Division (CID) inspectors to schedule, track and manage inspections conducted on critical infrastructure facilities. The CIIS application provides functionality to create inspection packages, violations, request enforcements, generate notice of violation letters, create legal enforcement cases, request a hearing and create hearings' cases and incidents. CID staff successfully used this application for their winter and summer inspections. The GIS team continues to support the CID division by streamlining the process of reporting, inspection, and management of the Supply Chain map.

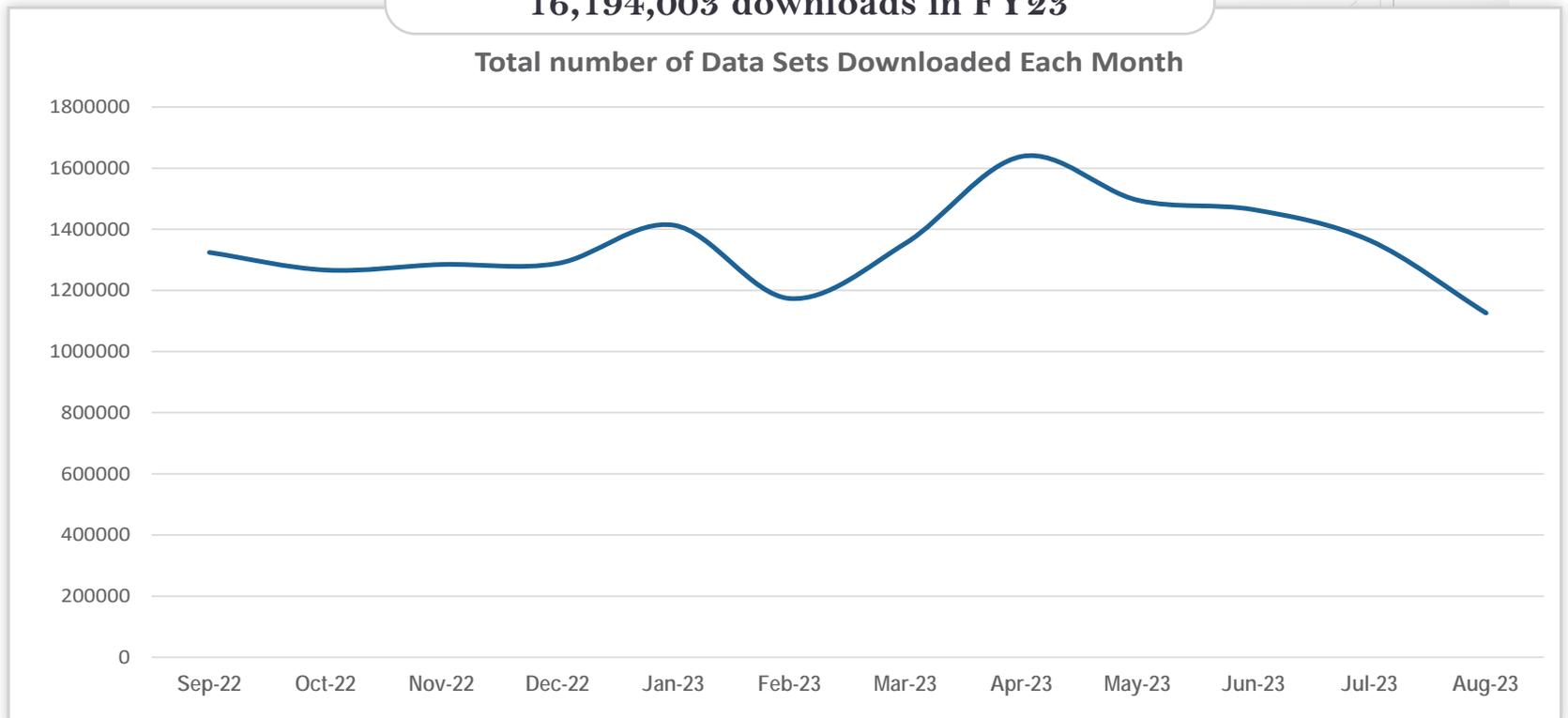
Central Records

The Public Sales Department processed 9,491 CRMS receipts in FY23 for total payments of \$6,645,900. The Research team completed 290 Internal requests and 304 External request for a total of 594 requests. 3545 hours of research time was spent on those requests by Central Records Researchers. The Research department also managed the Microfilm imaging with a whopping 4,628,436 images added in FY23, from 1,631 rolls of microfilm.

The Files Team processed 3,746,951 Day Forward documents and 888,709 documents from the District office project for a total of 4,635,660 images. The Information Services department processed a total of 9,264,096 digital images in FY23. Since August of 2012 the RRC has imaged 69,527,063 images from non-digital formats. Just like last year the public and industry loved the convenience of our data sets for download and broke last year's numbers by almost 2,000,000.

Data Sets For Download 16,194,003 downloads in FY23

Total number of Data Sets Downloaded Each Month



OIL & GAS FIELD OPERATIONS



Number of oil and gas well and facility inspections performed: **424,652**.



Average number of oil and gas well and facility inspections performed by district office staff: **2,401**.



Percent of Wells not inspected in last five years: **0.63%**.



Total well population inspected: **38%**.



Number of orphaned wells plugged with the use of state managed funds: **1,750**.



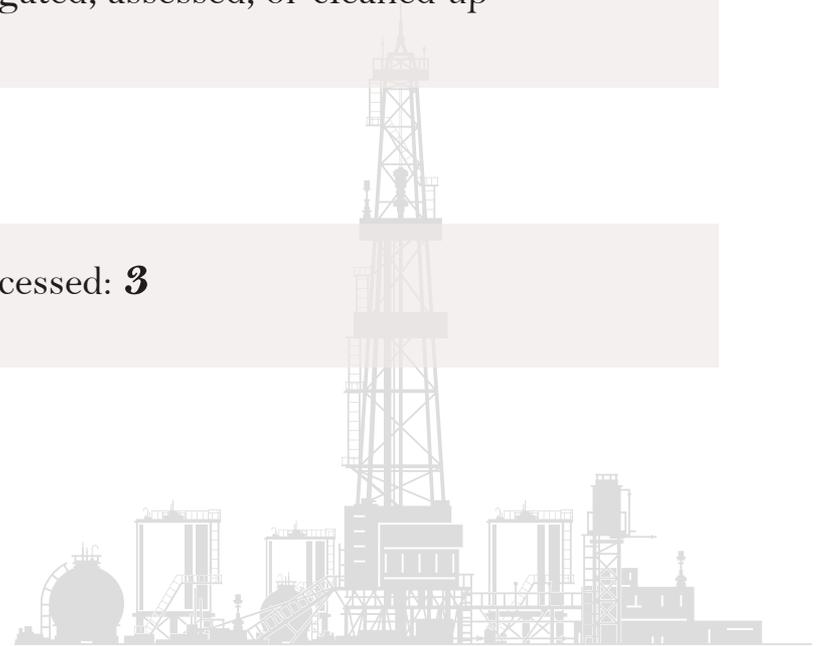
Number of abandoned pollution sites investigated, assessed, or cleaned up with the use of state managed funds: **239**.



Drilling Permits processed = **12,912**



Average Time for Drilling Permits to be Processed: **3**



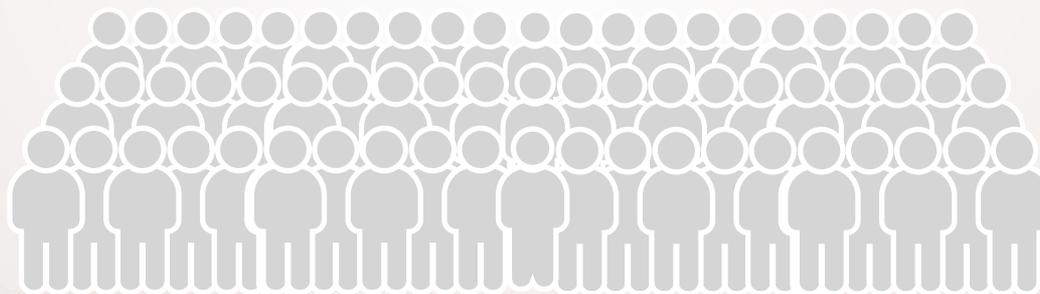
HUMAN RESOURCES

With the increase in our headcount, we saw the need to increase the number of recruiters. The agency now has three full-time recruiters to help managers hire the best candidates. The additional recruiters not only help us improve processes and manage the candidate flow more efficiently, but they have also allowed us to attend more job fairs. It has been great to see job fairs return to “in-person” events. While virtual events are beneficial, nothing beats meeting candidates face-to-face to share information about our agency.

During FY23, the recruiting team attended several job fairs including a veteran’s fair at Fort Bliss, and three Oil & Gas job fairs in Midland, Houston, and San Antonio. They also attended an engineering job fair at Texas A&M University in College Station. We have already seen the impact of attending these events with three new employees joining our agency who we met through these events.

In FY 23:

- Hired **214** employees.
- Trained **33** new managers.
- **270** new employees participated in the Agency Overview training session.



CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE DIVISION

Notable goals achieved in FY23 as the division completed its first year as a fully operational entity:

The division ensured that no loss of natural gas impacted the electricity supply chain during Winter Storm Elliott, Winter Storm Mara, an ERCOT-declared energy emergency alert, and the second-hottest summer on record which set new electrical usage peak high for Texas.

Submitted the first letter to the Legislature, Lieutenant Governor and Governor on weatherization preparedness and the status of emergency operations plans in accordance with Texas Utilities Code §186.008 and enacted by Senate Bill 3, 87th Legislature (2021).

Completed three major informational technology projects to include implementing the Critical Infrastructure Inspection System (CIIS) to catalog and track all weatherization preparedness inspections through the extreme cold and extreme heat cycles.

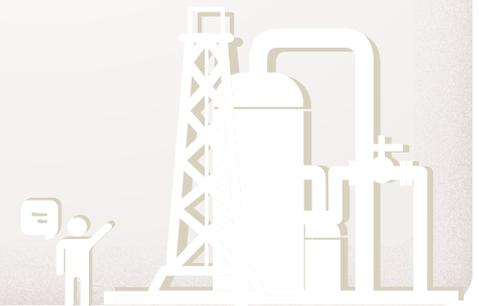
Total CI-D processed in 2023:
Approximately **2700** to date.

Total CI-X processed in 2023:
Over **1700** to date.

Total Emergency Operations Plans (EOPS) reviewed:
Over **900** to date and CID provided feedback to **100%** of operators that filed an EOP.

Percentage of Weatherization Preparedness Training Completed:
100% of planned training events (includes CID inspectors and CID staff).

Number of site inspections performed:
7,294 for the FY23 extreme cold and extreme heat cycles



PIPELINE SAFETY

Pipeline Safety continued its focus on program inspections and new construction inspections, exceeding its goal for FY 23.



Number of pipeline specialized program inspections: **2,275**



Average number of pipeline field inspections per field inspector: **89**

PIPELINE SUPPORT/DAMAGE PREVENTION



The Pipeline Damage Prevention Program continued seeing positive outreach results. Damage Prevention's efforts reached over **5,000** attendees, which included Excavator Safety workshops throughout the state, to larger expos like the Sunbelt Builders Show and Tx811 Damage Prevention Summit.



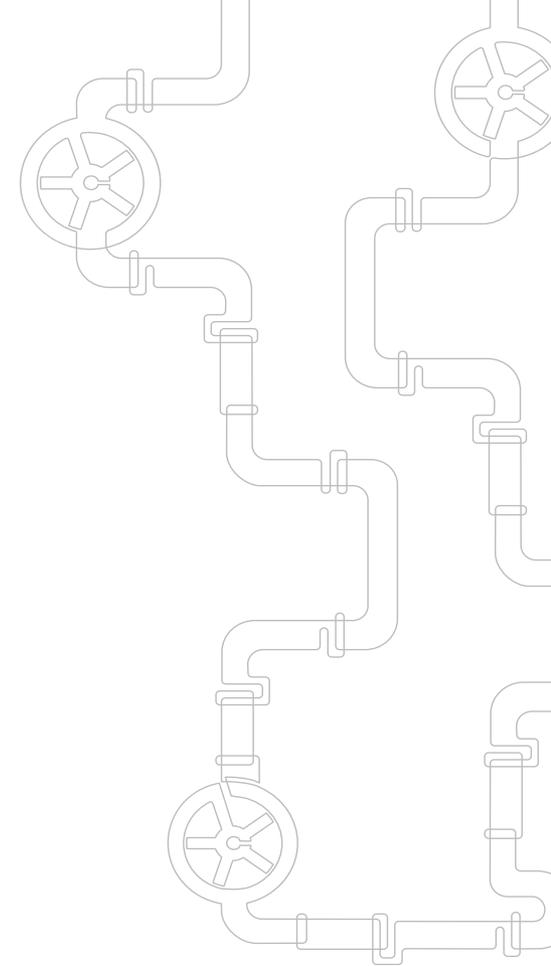
Industry stakeholders and the Pipeline Damage Prevention Program's combined outreach efforts affected the number of damages reported, dropping from **12,280** reported in FY 2022, to **11,080** for FY 2023.



The Pipeline Damage Prevention Program issued **2708** dockets and collected **\$7,051,544** in penalties in FY 2023.



The RRC's pipeline permitting team processed **4,131** permit actions and collected **\$5,065,345** in fees this fiscal year.



ALTERNATIVE FUELS SAFETY

Performance Measure	FY 2023 Total
Inspections performed	19,434
Violations cited	25,744
Number of Individuals Attending LPG Training/CE	4,362
Completion reports processed within 30 business days	11.5%
Completion reports processed	2,735
Plans processed within 30 business days	100%
Plan applications processed	10

39,029

Exams/licenses/certifications /registrations



7,959 - Exams administered



449 - New exempt registrations



12,763 - Certification renewals



3,449 - Registrant renewals



7,593 - Licenses issued/renewed



6,816 - Trucks registered/renewed

Current stats

4,435

currently licensed/registered companies/individuals

14,661

currently certified individuals

4,051

currently registered individuals

90,562

current alternative fuel installations

MARKET OVERSIGHT

The Market Oversight Section responded to **820** customer complaints and inquiries and reviewed approximately **140,000** tariffs.

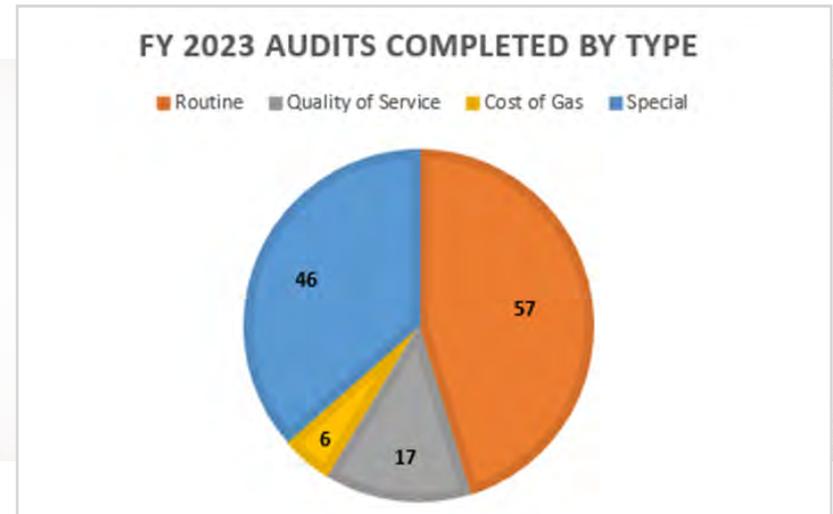
MOS Staff also participated in **5** statement of intent rate cases and **65** administrative gas utility filings.

UTILITY AUDIT SECTION

Gas Utility Tax collected for FY 2023 was \$ **40,195,829**.

Audits Conducted - The Utility Audit Section's auditors conducted a total of **126** audits during FY 2023. This was **90%** of the performance measure goal and an average of **15.75** audits per auditor.

Due to turnover in the audit department, there were several months where the audit team was not fully staffed so the full number of audits was not able to be met.



SURFACE MINING & RECLAMATION

Number of coal mining permit actions processed: **469**

Number of coal mining inspections performed: **392**

Percent of coal permitting actions completed within statutory review time frames: **100%**



RRC AT EARTH X CONFERENCE AND EXPO

The Railroad Commission of Texas participated in this year's EarthX Conference and Expo in Dallas to spread awareness of the commission's 100-plus years' of work protecting Texas while regulating the state's oil and gas industry.



School group at RRC Expo booth.

“Contrary to popular belief, fossil fuel usage and a clean environment are not mutually exclusive,” said Commissioner Wayne Christian, who attended the conference with RRC staff. “In the last 100 years, fossil fuels have helped to save human lives from the elements, provided more food to the starving, lifted people out of poverty, and helped enable our modern, technological way of life in the 21st century. With about 3 billion people on this planet needing access

to reliable energy, global energy strategies should be about empowering access to fossil fuels not limiting them.”

For over a century, the RRC has carried out a mission protecting the environment as related to and around energy production. The RRC is taking this opportunity to inform the public about some of the relevant issues and statistics surrounding energy in Texas.

The agency has evolved over the decades utilizing state-of-the-art technology, inspections, and staff expertise to protect groundwater and the safety of residents in a growing state. The RRC has been nationally recognized for many of its programs including but not limited to orphaned well plugging, abandoned mine land restoration, seismicity monitoring, groundwater protection, and surface mining reclamation.

According to the Association of Air Pollution Control Agencies (AAPCA), over the last fifty years the six major pollutants regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency have decreased by 78%. That's during a period the U.S. economy grew 292%, the population grew 62%, and energy use grew by 43%. And according to the AAPCA there's been a nearly 10% decrease in energy-related carbon dioxide emissions from 1999-2019, while total energy production in the U.S. increased by 42%.

HUMAN RESOURCES ATTEND CAREER EXPO

In mid-April, Human Resources' recruiting team attended their first in-person job fair in four years, marking the return of live job fairs instead of the virtual ones that became commonplace in the wake of COVID. Talent Acquisition Managers, Rafael Navas and Brittany Butler attended the Austin Career Expo at the Palmer Events Center. There, they participated with over 100 state and county agencies and private industry companies.

Rafael and Brittany were able to connect with about 60 candidates and collected 20 more interested candidates using QR codes to capture candidate information. Human Resources is very excited to see in-person job fairs make a comeback to have the opportunity to personally connect with candidates and showcase our great agency.

TEXAS OILFIELD WATER CONFERENCE

Commissioner Jim Wright provided the keynote address and participated in a panel discussion at the 3rd Annual Oilfield Water Markets Conference held in Fort Worth mid-May. This conference gathered business leaders from exploration & production companies, oilfield water midstream, water service companies, information providers, investors, regulators, landowners, and other stakeholders in the oilfield water marketplace to discuss trends that drive value.

Blake Ramon, Oil and Gas Division Assistant District Director — Wichita Falls; Ricardo Rosso, Oil and Gas Division — Technical Permitting; Ted Wooten, Oil and Gas Division's Chief Engineer joined Scott Sroufe in our exhibit booth at this conference.



WEST TEXAS COUNTY JUDGES AND COMMISSIONERS CONFERENCE

Larry Snelson, Manager and Derek Lawrence, Inspector for Pipeline Safety Region — Lubbock, joined RRC's Outreach Coordinator Scott Sroufe at the West Texas County Judges and Commissioners Conference held in Lubbock. This is a great event as we aid officials who may have questions about industry activity and regulation in their county.

This conference is hosted by the County Judges and Commissioners Association of Texas (CJCAT). They host regional conferences throughout the state as well as the statewide annual meeting in October each year. We are looking forward to the opportunity to participate in two other upcoming regional events in data and Galveston in the summer months.

TEXAS EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE

This year, the Texas Emergency Management Conference was in moved to Fort Worth and had saw more than 4,000 attendees, 200 workshop sessions, and one of the largest exhibit halls ever.

RRC had five workshop sessions taught by our staff at the conference. April Richardson and David Vire led a session on Propane Incidents while Peter Pope and Diane Beckham spoke about dealing with Oil and Gas related incidents. Travis Baer and Scott Sroufe presented a companion session to Peter and Diane that addressed the regulatory authority of both RRC and Texas Commission on Environmental Equality and how to know who to call in emergencies. Jared Ware

presented a session giving an overview of what our Critical Infrastructure Division has learned in its first year as well as what to expect in the future. Jonathan Saucedo finished out the conference with a presentation on Pipeline Safety and reporting pipeline incidents.

In addition to the workshop sessions, RRC also had a booth in the exhibit hall. It was great to have staff from Alternative Fuels, Critical Infrastructure, Oversight and Safety, and Communications present to answer specific questions from attendees. Thanks to all who made our efforts a great success!

RRC ROUNDTABLES WITH PERMIAN BASIN PETROLEUM ASSOCIATION

For three days in August, RRC employees participated in a roundtable discussion with oil and gas operators. This first-ever event was hosted by the Permian Basin Petroleum Association (PBPA) in Midland.

“The purpose of the PBPA event was to foster a collaborative environment between the RRC and the regulated industry,” said Jeffery Morgan, Oil and Gas District 08 Director – Midland. “Industry representatives were able to ask questions or voice concerns about regulatory forms and procedures. The RRC was able to describe proper steps for processing those forms.”

The event also featured visits to drilling sites operated by Pioneer Natural Res. USA, Inc., water recycling and disposal sites operated by Environmental Disposal Systems, and a production facility operated by XTO Energy Inc./Exxon.

“This allowed RRC staff the opportunity to observe field operations and gain a deeper understanding of what takes place behind the paperwork we process,” said Crystal Denson, Oil & Gas District 7C Director – San Angelo.

The following employees attended the roundtable on account of their engagement with operators, technical skills, and overall knowledge of RRC policies/procedures.

- Doug Allmand, Oil & Gas West Region Director / Oil & Gas District 7B Director – Abilene
- Zachary Atkins, Oil & Gas Compliance Analyst
- Crystal Denson, Oil & Gas District 7C Director – San Angelo
- Mysti Doshier, Critical Infrastructure, Assistant Division Director
- Paul Dubois, Assistant Oil & Gas Director for Technical Permitting
- Jarrod Eberly, Critical Infrastructure, West Region Director – Lubbock
- David King, Oil & Gas Drilling Permits Manager
- Jeffery Morgan, Oil & Gas District 08 Director – Midland
- Teresa McDanel, Oil & Gas Compliance Analyst
- Atia Rahman, Oil & Gas Engineering Specialist
- Ric Rosso, Oil & Gas, Injection-Storage Permitting Manager
- Joe Stasulli, Assistant Oil & Gas Director for Administrative Compliance
- Nicolas Stasulli, Critical Infrastructure, Administrative Compliance Manager

RRC STAFF PARTICIPATE IN OUTREACH AND LEARNING

The end of March brought an annual outreach event for RRC that makes many always ask, “What were you doing there?” The event was the Texas Southwest Cattle Raisers Convention, held in Fort Worth.

This event brings together over 3,500 cattle raisers, landowners, and industry professionals each year and the Expo features over 180,000 square feet of exhibit space for more than 260 companies.

This year, RRC was among those exhibiting at the Expo and had the opportunity to answer questions from landowners and ranchers related to oil and gas activity on their property. Questions ranged through

topics such as operator responsibility, abandoned equipment, and well or lease information. Many would stop by our booth to express gratitude for the work done by RRC inspectors and staff that they have dealt with regarding issues on their land.

This event was truly a team effort as members of our Communications Division were joined by Blake Ramon and Ray Horton from the Wichita Falls Oil and Gas District Office. “It’s always a great benefit to work with Blake and Ray,” says Scott Sroufe, Outreach Coordinator. “Their insights and knowledge are invaluable.”





In early April, staff from RRCs Oversight and Safety Division, Stephanie Weidman and Carrie Ebbinghaus traveled to Washington D.C. to attend the Annual Grants Training Conference. This conference, sponsored by the National Grants Management Association provides education and resources needed to understand grants management.

The conference, with over 1,200 in attendance, was billed as the ideal event for grants professionals at all career levels. The agenda included keynote speakers, panel discussions, and over 40 breakout sessions. It was a great opportunity for our staff to ensure compliance and best utilize grants received for Pipeline Safety.

ROOSEVELT ELEMENTARY VISIT

In what may be a first for the RRC, a team of agency ambassadors visited an elementary school.

Roosevelt Elementary in San Antonio hosted a Career Day and invited the RRC to share employment opportunities in the energy industry and agency to over 300 second, third, fourth and fifth graders.

“It’s the future we are looking towards getting them to know what we are doing and what kinds of jobs we will need in the future,” said Lorenzo Garza, Oil and Gas Division. “It was fun to see their exuberance.”

The students had done their research in advance and knew the RRC no longer has jurisdiction over railroads and were excited about jobs related to geology and surface mining and being inspectors.

“It is very important to talk to children because they are citizens of Texas too. They need to know our mission,” said Michelle Banks, Office of Public engagement.

In addition to Lorenzo and Michelle, the entourage included Nick Kraynok, Communications Division, Rafael Navas, Human Resources and Meghan Garcia, Oil and Gas Division in San Antonio.



RRC ATTENDS THE TEXAS GAS ASSOCIATION OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE

Texas Gas Association hosted their Operations and Management Conference in San Marcos and RRC was well represented there. Chairman Christi Craddick was in attendance during the opening day luncheon to give an RRC Update. Stephanie Weidman and Carrie Ebbinghaus, Oversight and Safety, attended the meeting and Stephanie spoke

on RRC rule changes and updates. Stephanie also joined PHMSA representatives in a presentation on updates to pipeline rules. Jared Ware participated in the Day 2 General Session discussing “How the System Operated During the 2022 Freeze.”



NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY FELLOWS VISIT RRC

In early January the RRC welcomed a group of international fellows from the National Defense University to Austin. The group of 77 included military officers and defense ministry civilians from South America, Asia, and Europe.

National Defense University is a military university based in Washington D.C. and funded by the Department of Defense. It focuses on high-level training and education of warfighters in critical thinking, national strategy, and globally integrated operations. The fellows attending the university do so at the invitation of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Throughout a year's study, the fellows complete a Master's of National Security Strategy degree alongside American counterparts from a mix of military services and federal government agencies.

Part of their course of study includes a course in American studies. In this course, they travel across the United States to expose the international fellows to the complexities of American society through an examination of U.S. government institutions, political



processes, the judicial system, the free market system, education, and health and human services.

While visiting Texas, the group focused on government, energy, and migration. On their trip, they also visited Montana, Tennessee, and Massachusetts.

RRC was honored to host this group and present an overview of how we regulate the oil and gas industry in Texas.



International Fellows present RRC Outreach Coordinator Scott Sroufe with a plaque containing a photo of the graduating class as appreciation for the agency being part of their American Studies visit.



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