

AUGUST 2026



ENERGY NEWS



TABLE OF CONTENTS

3	Letter from the RRC
4	RRC and Texas Tech Build Partnership to Strengthen Oil and Gas Inspector Training
6	Geothermal Energy Gains Ground in Texas Under RRC Leadership
8	STOPTheft Task Force Holds Third Quarterly Meeting at RRC Regulatory Conference
10	RRC Concludes Record-Breaking 2026 Regulatory Conference
12	RRC Safety Management Team Leads Hurricane Readiness
14	RRC's Critical Infrastructure Division Hosts Emergency Operations Plan Submissions Webinar
15	Listening Sessions Resume September 9
16	Texas Energy on Track Podcast
18	Digging Into Safety: The Origins and Significance of National 811 Day
19	Stay connected with the RRC
20	Commissioners' Corner
22	Oil and Gas Industry Resources



LETTER FROM THE RRC

ENERGY NEWS

Welcome to the August edition of Energy News.

This month, the RRC continues its focus on innovation, safety and public engagement.

With a new partnership to expand inspector training, growing momentum in geothermal energy and the record-breaking 2026 Regulatory Conference, the Commission underscores its commitment to collaboration and transparency. Upcoming remote Listening Sessions, Emergency Operations Plan Submissions Webinar and readiness initiatives further highlight RRC's dedication to a resilient energy future for all Texans.

RRC and Texas Tech Build Partnership to Strengthen Oil and Gas Inspector Training

The collaboration will equip state inspectors with hands-on experience through a partnership between Texas Tech's Department of Petroleum Engineering and the RRC

As part of its ongoing effort to further strengthen staff expertise, the RRC has partnered with Texas Tech University's Bob L. Herd Department of Petroleum Engineering to launch the RRC Field Inspector Training program, a new initiative designed to enhance the professional development of the Commission's oil and gas inspectors.

After nearly a year of development and coordination, the first class of inspectors attended the four-day course held July 27-30 at the school's Oilfield Technology Center in Lubbock. The new program represents a major

advancement for the RRC, eliminating the need for inspectors to travel out of state for this specialized training by bringing it to Texas for the first time.

The course provides new or early-career inspectors with an enhanced, hands-on learning experience designed to help them better understand the equipment and environment that they will encounter in the field. Utilizing the world-class educational tools available at the facility, the training includes demonstrations of a variety of equipment, including the center's fully functional drilling rig, as well as training sessions covering key stages of a well's life-cycle, such as cementing, blowout prevention and well plugging.

"This training program further strengthens our field inspectors by providing them with the skills and knowledge needed to perform their jobs at the highest level," said Wei Wang, Executive Director of the RRC. "Partnerships among Texas institutions are critical to advancing the work we do and serving the people of our state. We are proud to partner with Texas Tech to enhance inspector training and help ensure



During the inaugural course, RRC leadership traveled from Austin to observe the training and heard from Dr. Marshall Watson, Chair of the Bob L. Herd Department of Petroleum Engineering.

“This partnership represents a meaningful step forward in how we connect education, industry and regulation,” said Watson, “By providing hands-on training in a realistic environment, we’re helping inspectors build the skills they need to ensure safe and efficient energy operations across Texas.”

While this course is tailored specifically for oil and gas inspectors, RRC Training Development is currently crafting a similar course for inspectors in the Commission’s Critical Infrastructure Division.





Geothermal Energy Gains Ground in Texas Under RRC Leadership

While best known as the oil and gas regulator for the Lone Star State, the RRC also has statutory responsibilities for other areas of the energy industry, including Texas' growing geothermal sector.

With significant overlap in technology and expertise with the oil and gas industry, geothermal development benefits from the RRC's established regulatory framework and team of experts. The Commission plays an important role in keeping geothermal projects compliant with rigorous environmental and safety standards as the industry continues to develop in Texas.

In February 2025, the RRC issued its first permit for a deep geopressured geothermal well to Sage Geosystems in Atascosa County. The project will provide energy storage for the San Miguel Electric Cooperative and its customers.

This month, the Commission issued its second

permit for a deep geopressured geothermal well for energy storage to Quidnet Energy Deployment LLC for a well located in Galveston County.

The issuance of the second permit highlights the continued growth of geothermal development in Texas and the RRC's role in supporting the safe and responsible advancement of emerging technologies.

"Since assuming jurisdiction over geothermal well regulations from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality in September 2023, the RRC has remained committed to taking a deliberate permitting approach that supports the responsible growth of this new technology," said RRC Executive Director Wei Wang. "This work in geothermal energy is yet another example of how the RRC's expertise in responsible subsurface regulation helps keep Texas at the forefront of energy development."

The Commission has also seen a significant growth in the average number of shallow closed-loop geothermal wells. These systems use the earth as a heat sink to help heat or cool a building, providing an efficient option for indoor climate control. Local independent school districts are increasingly adopting the technology to help meet their heating and cooling needs.

During fiscal years 2024 and 2025, approximately 1,400 shallow geothermal wells were completed each year. In the current fiscal year alone, 3,162 wells have been drilled and completed at 39 sites across Texas.

This rapid expansion reflects both the growing interest in geothermal technology and the effectiveness of the RRC's regulatory approach. The growth is due in part to a new shallow geothermal rule that clarified regulatory roles and activities without increasing the agency's

permitting fees or staffing requirements. This has helped create a clear, efficient regulatory pathway for the continued development of this new emerging technology.

For more on the RRC's geothermal permitting process, visit the link below.

GEOHERMAL PERMITTING







STOPTheft Task Force Holds Third Quarterly Meeting at RRC Regulatory Conference

The State Taskforce on Petroleum Theft (STOPTheft) convened its third quarterly meeting at the RRC Regulatory Conference in Round Rock, Texas, bringing together key leaders from state, federal and local law enforcement, as well as representatives from the Texas energy industry.

Created by Senate Bill 494 during the 89th Legislature, STOPTheft is entrusted with studying petroleum theft across Texas and developing actionable recommendations to combat the growing threat. Petroleum theft continues to pose significant operational and financial risks for energy operators statewide, making the task force's work essential to strengthen industry security and protect critical infrastructure.

RRC Chairman Jim Wright led the meeting, during which members continued refining recommendations for the task force's upcoming legislative report due in December. His participation underscored the Commission's commitment to supporting coordinated, statewide efforts to deter petroleum theft and strengthen enforcement.



RRC Concludes Record-Breaking 2026 Regulatory Conference

The RRC once again set a new attendance record at its 2026 Regulatory Conference, welcoming more than 1,100 attendees and over 60 exhibitors to the agency's premier annual educational event.

Held July 13–15 at the Kalahari Resort & Convention Center in Round Rock, the conference brought together stakeholders from across the oil and gas regulatory community, including operators, industry experts, state and federal regulators and other energy professionals.

RRC Executive Director Wei Wang opened the conference before welcoming RRC Chairman Jim Wright, who officially kicked off the event. The first session featured a fireside chat between Chairman Wright and State Represen-

tative Drew Darby, Chair of the Texas House Committee on Energy Resources, as well as an update from Chairman Wright on the Commission's STOPTheft Task Force. Attendees also heard from The Honorable Paul Roberti, Administrator of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), who discussed the evolving federal pipeline safety regulatory landscape.

On the second day of the conference, State Representative Cody Harris, Chair of the Texas House Committee on Natural Resources, joined Texas Oil and Gas Association President Todd Staples for a conversation on the future of Texas energy and natural resources.

"We're honored to bring together legislative, regulatory and industry leaders for meaningful discussions alongside the world-class educational sessions our Regulatory Conference has become known for," said RRC Executive Director Wei Wang. "This conference provides an invaluable opportunity for stakeholders across the energy industry to collaborate, share ideas



and help shape effective energy regulation in Texas. As the conference continues to grow, we're grateful for the strong participation and look forward to building on this momentum in 2027 to further strengthen effective energy regulation in Texas."

More than 90 educational sessions were offered throughout the three-day conference. While many focused on oil and gas regulation, pipeline safety and critical infrastructure, this year's agenda expanded to include new educational tracks on Alternative Fuels Safety and Surface Mining and Reclamation.

Session highlights included discussions on inactive well compliance, Class VI wells, incident reporting, National Transportation Safety Board investigations and other emerging regulatory topics impacting the Texas energy industry.

New this year, attendees also had access to a dedicated conference mobile app, allowing them to view the agenda, create personalized schedules, connect with exhibitors and network with fellow attendees.

The Railroad Commission has already secured dates for next year's conference, which will return to the Kalahari Resort & Convention Center in Round Rock July 19–21, 2027.





RRC Safety Management Team Leads Hurricane Readiness

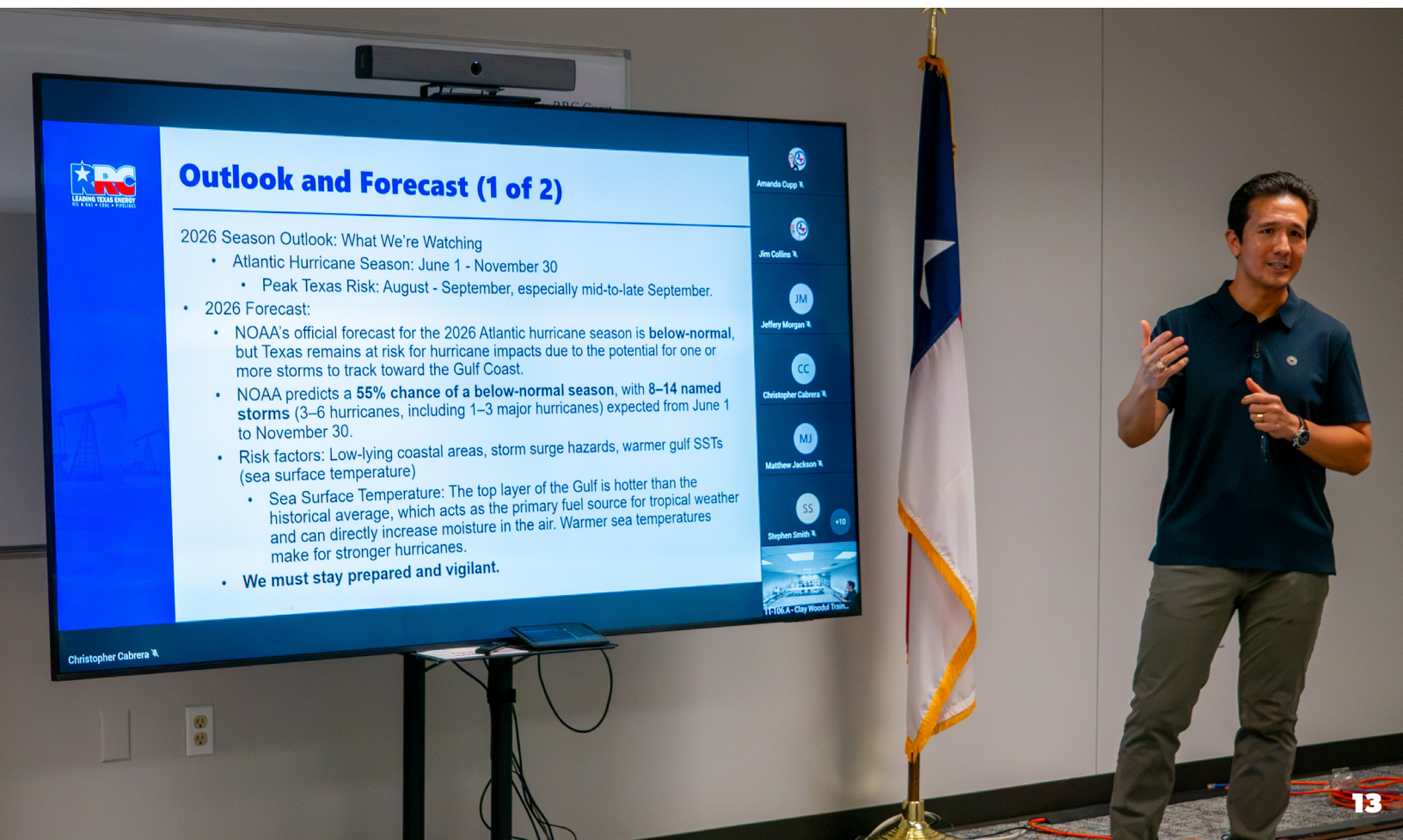
The RRC held an internal prep meeting focused on hurricane season readiness, hosted by the agency's Safety and Emergency Management Team. The session highlighted the Commission's responsibility to protect Texas communities and safeguard the state's vital energy infrastructure during severe weather events.

Hurricane season runs from June 1 to November 30, with August and September historically the most active months. The Safety Team emphasized the unique risks Texas faces, including the exceptionally warm waters of the Gulf of America that fuel rapid storm intensification, low-lying coastal areas vulnerable to flooding, and the destructive potential of storm-surge hazards that can impact inland communities.

Leadership reinforced the importance of vigilance during peak months and the critical role of the Safety Team in guiding preparedness efforts. By strengthening protocols and main-

taining readiness, the Commission continues to protect Texans and the energy resources that power the state.







RRC's Critical Infrastructure Division Hosts Emergency Operations Plan Submissions Webinar

RRC's Critical Infrastructure Division (CID) will host a **webinar on Wednesday, August 12, 2026, at 12:00 p.m.** to provide operators with updated guidance on submitting Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs). The session will focus on current review standards and help operators understand what is required for a complete and compliant submission.

Only operators who meet statutory criteria are subject to EOP filing requirements. This includes facilities that produce, treat, process, pressurize, store or transport natural gas and are included on the Texas Electricity Supply Chain Security and Mapping Committee map, first adopted on April 29, 2022, pursuant to Texas Utilities Code §186.008.

This webinar will give operators the chance to hear directly from CID staff and ask questions in real time, providing clarity on filing expectations and key requirements. Attendance is strongly encouraged for any operator subject

to EOP obligations or seeking a better understanding of the updated review process.

For questions, please contact CID@rrc.texas.gov or visit link below to register.

REGISTER HERE





Listening Sessions Resume September 9

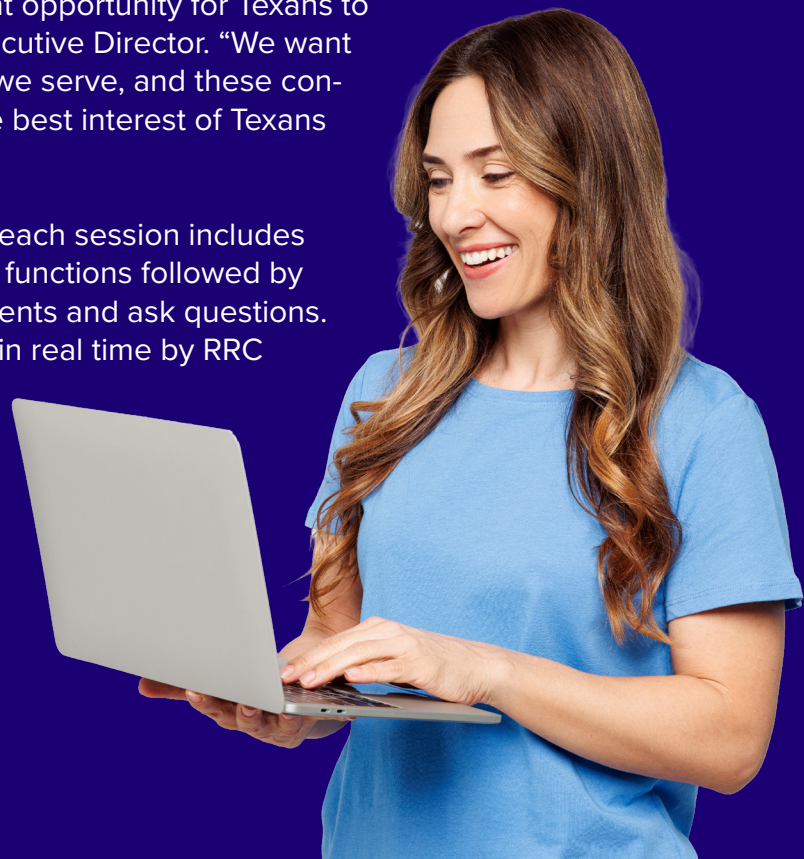
The RRC's remote Listening Sessions resume on September 9. These sessions are designed to give Texans a direct, accessible way to share their perspectives on the agency's work. These remote sessions invite residents from across the state to participate, ask questions and express their opinions about the RRC's role as Texas' oldest regulatory agency.

"The remote Listening Sessions are an important opportunity for Texans to speak directly with us," said Wei Wang, RRC Executive Director. "We want to better understand the perspectives of those we serve, and these conversations help us listen, learn and lead with the best interest of Texans in mind."

Organized by the Office of Public Engagement, each session includes a brief overview of the Commission's regulatory functions followed by an opportunity for participants to provide comments and ask questions. These questions and comments are addressed in real time by RRC subject-matter experts, fostering an open dialogue with community members.

Registration is required to participate and comment. For more information and to register, please visit link below.

REGISTER HERE





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ENERGY ON TRACK

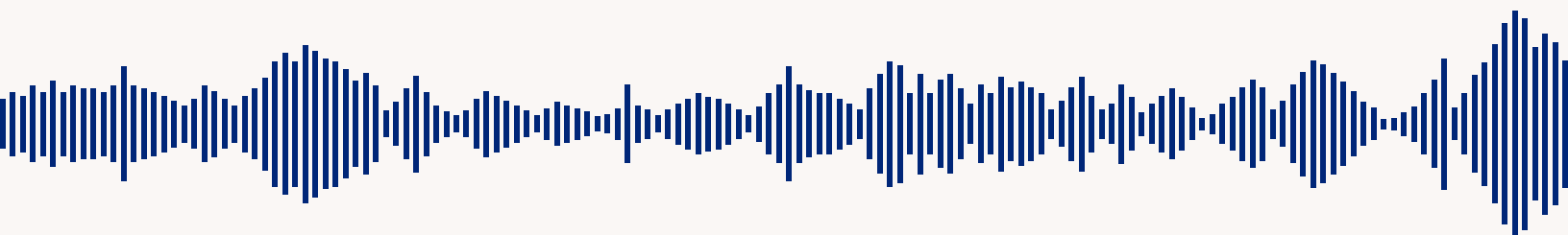
AN RRC PODCAST



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Episode 23: Subsurface Investigations

In this episode of *Texas Energy on Track*, host Bryce Dubee and co-host Nick Kraynok talk with James Harcourt, RRC Geologic Advisory Unit Manager. The discussion covers what the Unit investigates, what the DICE system is, how it protects groundwater and more!

Episode 24: On Location from the 2026 RRC Regulatory Conference

Host Bryce Dubee and co-host Nick Kraynok report live from the 2026 RRC Regulatory Conference in Round Rock for *Texas Energy on Track*. They speak with Exxon's Heather Taylor and Repsol's Jake Toloso about their experiences at the conference and what they look forward to each year. They also sit down with RRC's Joey Bass and Rafael Navas about conference highlights, who should attend and what to expect from the annual event.







Digging Into Safety: The Origins and Importance of National 811 Day

Each year on August 11, damage prevention professionals, utility operators, regulators and industry partners across the United States recognize National 811 Day. Established by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), this national awareness effort reinforces a simple but critical safety action for anyone planning excavation work: contact 811 or submit an online locate request through their state's one call center.

The Evolution of 811

- **The Challenge:** Prior to the creation of 811, excavators, contractors and homeowners were required to track down and call multiple local numbers to request utility locates. This fragmented system contributed to missed notifications, project delays, and preventable utility damage, some of which resulted in serious injuries and service disruptions.
- **The National Solution:** To streamline the process, the FCC designated 811 as the nationwide, toll free "Call Before You Dig" number in 2005. The following year, the PIPES Act of 2006 mandated its adoption across all states and integrated it into federal pipeline safety initiatives.

- **The Launch:** The 811 system became fully operational nationwide in May 2007. Soon after, August 11 (8/11) was designated as National 811 Day, an intentional date choice intended to reinforce the number itself.

Why National 811 Day Matters

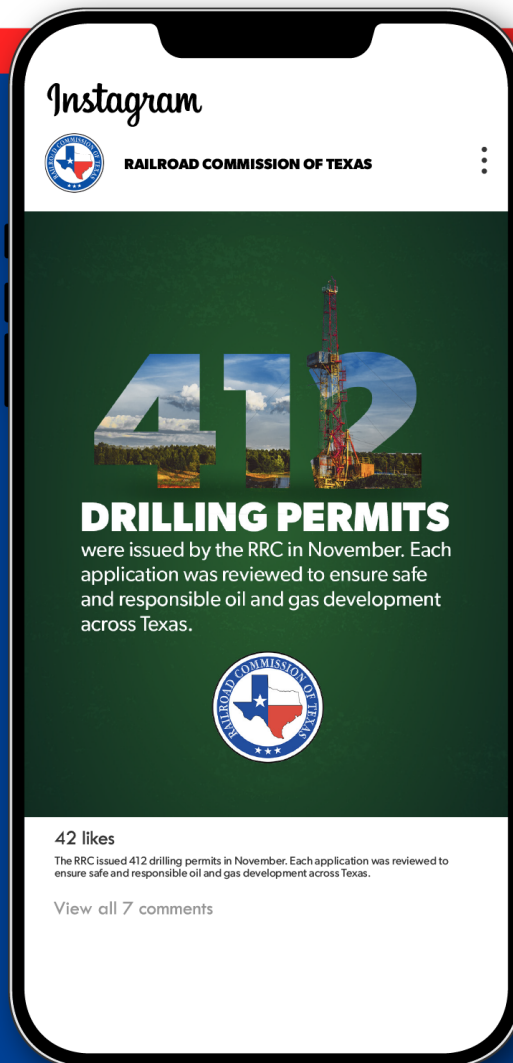
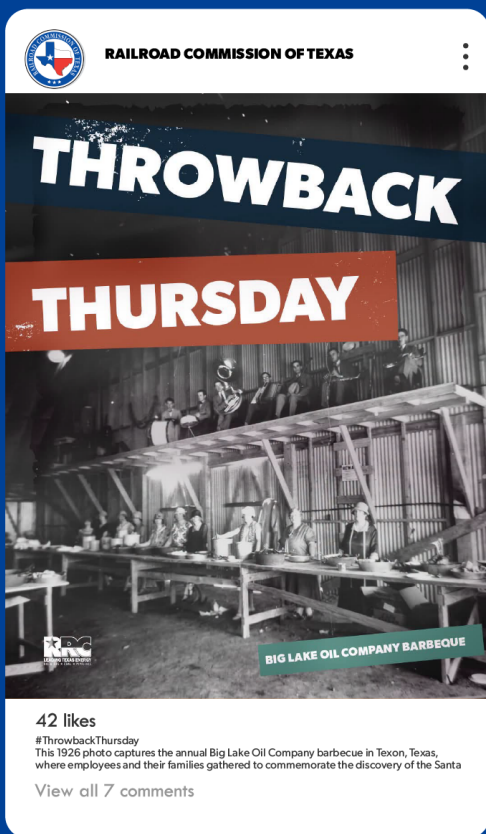
National 811 Day underscores a foundational principle of damage prevention: safe digging is a shared responsibility. A free request to 811 helps ensure underground utilities are properly marked before excavation begins, reducing the likelihood of service outages, costly repairs and safety hazards for workers and the public.

Whether your project is large-scale or residential, contacting 811 is essential. Texans can start their request at **Texas811.org**.



Stay connected with the RRC

Stay informed between newsletter editions by following the RRC on social media.



COMMISSIONERS' CORNER



CHAIRMAN WRIGHT

RRC Chairman Jim Wright kicked off the Commission's annual Regulatory Conference in July with a fireside chat alongside State Representative Drew Darby, Chair of the Texas House Committee on Energy Resources. He also provided attendees with an update on the Commission's STOPTheft Task Force, underscoring ongoing efforts to combat equipment and infrastructure theft across the oil and gas sector.



On day two, Chairman Wright joined State Representative Cody Harris, Chair of the Texas House Committee on Natural Resources, and Texas Oil & Gas Association President Todd Staples for a forward looking discussion on the future of Texas energy and natural resources, highlighting the shared focus between state leadership and industry on long term stability and growth.

Chairman Wright also recently sat down with World Oil to outline his priorities for the remainder of his term, emphasizing the need for strategic partnerships and infrastructure planning to stabilize markets and expand Texas' global reach.

"If you just look at my mission statement, of course we're responsible for the safety of the industry that we regulate. We're responsible for the environmental impacts of those industries. But there's a third thing that says we're also responsible to make sure that these industries' economic vitality remains and is secure."

-Chairman Wright

Chairman Wright highlighted efforts to secure Canadian heavy crude for blending, address gasoline and diesel price volatility and ensure Texas producers can capitalize on emerging global market openings.

[READ FULL INTERVIEW IN WORLD OIL](#)



COMMISSIONER CHRISTIAN



In July, RRC Commissioner Wayne Christian participated in media interviews with CBS Texas' *Eye on Politics*, KVUE and KXAN to discuss the rapid growth of data centers in Texas and the critical role natural gas will play in powering the emerging industry. In the interviews, Commissioner Christian also emphasized the opportunity for Texas to support continued economic growth while positioning the state's energy industry to meet rising electricity demand.

Commissioner Christian and his office also completed the third edition of the *Oil and Gas Primer*, an educational resource that details the RRC's vital role in regulating Texas' oil and gas industry and highlights the industry's contributions to the state's economy, energy security, job creation and quality of life. The updated primer serves as a resource for policymakers, stakeholders and Texans seeking to better understand the importance of oil and natural gas to the state, as well as other key issues and policy priorities advanced by Commissioner Christian.



OPEN MEETING

Tues. August 18 | 9:30 AM

Join us in Austin at the William B. Travis Building or online by visiting the link

[**VIEW WEBSITE**](#)

OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY RESOURCES



OIL & GAS PRODUCTION STATISTICS

View monthly production totals of crude oil, condensate and total oil; and of gas well gas, casinghead gas and total natural gas.

[VIEW CURRENT PRODUCTION STATISTICS](#)



ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

The Commission has primary oversight and enforcement of the state's oil and gas industry and intrastate pipeline safety.

[VIEW LATEST ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS](#)



PUBLIC GIS VIEWER

The Public GIS Viewer allows users to view oil, gas and pipeline data in a map view.

[LAUNCH THE PUBLIC GIS VIEWER](#)