

JULY 2026



ENERGY NEWS

FROM THE FIELD
PHOTO BY CARL VESSELS



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LETTER FROM THE RRC

ENERGY NEWS

Welcome to the July edition of *Energy News*.

This month highlights the Railroad Commission of Texas' (RRC) ongoing work to protect Texas' energy future while celebrating the nation's spirit of innovation and independence.

With new plugging operations underway along the coast, continued collaboration with federal and academic partners and preparations for the 2026 RRC Regulatory Conference in Austin nearing completion, the Commission remains focused on supporting a resilient, reliable energy landscape for all Texans.



HONORING AMERICA'S BIRTHDAY, STRENGTHENING ITS ENERGY FUTURE



Following this year's July 4th celebrations marking America's birthday, the Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC) continues its support of the Texas America250 Commission's initiative to highlight Texas' essential role in the nation's history.

For 135 years, the RRC has guided responsible energy development that fuels Texas' growth and strengthens America's independence and economic resilience. As the America250 milestone passes, the agency remains committed to advancing the energy foundation that will support the nation's continued progress for generations to come.





RRC Welcomes European Parliament Members to Texas

The Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC) was honored to host members of the European Parliament's Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) for a discussion on energy regulation at the RRC headquarters on May 29.

The European Parliament's delegation included seven elected members, including ITRE Chair Borys Budka, as well as committee staff and advisors.

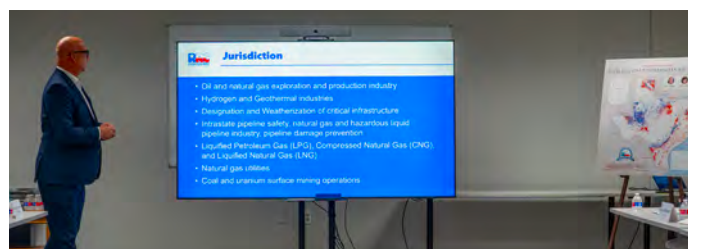
The ITRE, responsible for European Union legislation related to energy, telecommunications and industry, sought insights from the Commission's subject matter experts who regulate one of the world's most dynamic energy economies.

"It was a privilege to welcome members of the European Parliament to Austin," said Wei Wang, RRC Executive Director. "Transatlantic partnership is essential to addressing modern energy challenges, and we are grateful for the delegation taking time to learn why the RRC is instrumental in maintaining Texas' position as a global leader in responsible energy development."

Following the presentation, representatives engaged RRC leadership in a robust conversation on several topics, with a keen interest in how Texas has streamlined permitting procedures for oil and gas wells and pipelines. They also discussed recent developments in

the state's energy landscape, including investments in dispatchable thermal power, closed-loop geothermal projects and emerging hydrogen pipeline infrastructure.

Already this year, the Commission has hosted multiple foreign visitors – including more than 30 members of the Argentine national legislature, government officials, industry executives and municipal leaders during an AmCham Argentina visit, as well as Canadian Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre – further demonstrating the RRC's role at the forefront of the global conversation on energy production and regulation.





RRC Begins Plugging on Coastal Orphaned Wells

The Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC) will use its decades of experience to tackle a series of difficult and complex orphaned wells in the coastal waters of Baffin Bay.

The six orphaned wells located in the Cayo del Grullo region of the bay, roughly 40 miles south of Corpus Christi, will be plugged by the Commission's award-winning State Managed Plugging Program (SMP).

The abandoned gas wells will be plugged using funds from the \$100M appropriated by the Texas Legislature last session to support emergency and technically challenging well plugging projects across the state where immediate action is required. These wells were observed by members of the local community to be leaking natural gas, prompting this response, which will include removing the well structure in addition to plugging.

The Commission is committed to protecting both public safety and the environment using a robust prioritization system, so that high-risk, high-priority wells are plugged first, protecting Texans from the most serious hazards.

This work is part of a broader operation in which the RRC and the Texas General Land Office (GLO) signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) authorizing the Commission to plug wells in the areas of Baffin Bay, Humble Channel and Pita Island. The MOU also provides \$3 million in funding from the GLO to support the project, which is anticipated to be completed later this year.

"Our substantial experience in managing unique well plugging operations gives us expertise that other agencies – and most importantly Texans – can rely on," said Wei Wang, RRC Executive Director. "The combination of the \$100 million funding from the Legislature and GLO funding has given us the opportunity to be able to enact a permanent solution without sacrificing our plugging responsibility in other areas."

Last year, the RRC was awarded the Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commission (IOGCC) Chair's Stewardship Award for Environmental Partnership in recognition of its leadership in a multi-stakeholder partnership to plug eight offshore orphaned wells in Matagorda Bay, one of the most complex offshore plugging and abandonment operations ever undertaken on orphaned wells in U.S. waters.

As of June 10, 2026, SMP has plugged 1,688 wells in fiscal year 2026, adding to the more than 47,000 wells the SMP has plugged across the state since 1984.





RRC Hosts GLO and TCU for Coastal Orphan Wells Overview



The Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC) recently welcomed representatives from the Texas General Land Office (GLO) and students from the Texas Christian University (TCU) Neeley School of Business to our Austin headquarters for an in-depth discussion on coastal orphan wells and emerging energy challenges.

During the visit, RRC staff provided an overview of the agency's jurisdiction and ongoing initiatives, including offshore well plugging efforts. RRC Oil and Gas leadership also discussed using the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Oil and Gas Regulation and Cleanup funding, and additional state agency funding, along with support from the GLO, to address high-priority sites such as those in Baffin Bay. Conversations also highlighted the importance of data-driven decision-making and improved access to offshore infrastructure information in complex coastal environments.

The meeting was also an opportunity to recognize the contributions of TCU students who are gaining hands-on experience as future leaders in America's energy sector. It also reinforced the importance of strong coordination between state agencies and academic partners to enhance protection of natural resources and support long-term energy stewardship across Texas.



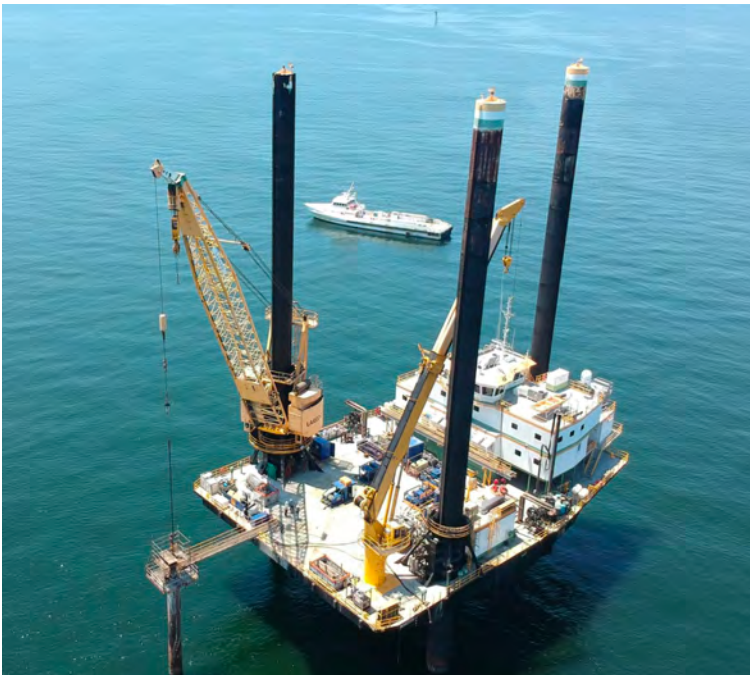
District 3 Staff Visit Offshore Orphan Well Plugging Project

Staff from the Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC) District 3 Office recently traveled offshore to review ongoing operations at the orphan well plugging project in the High Island 98 Block, located off the Bolivar Peninsula. The project, which began in January 2026, has made steady progress with multiple wells already plugged.

from workboats to the lift boat. The visit provided an opportunity to see firsthand the technical planning, operational discipline and collaborative effort required to conduct safe and efficient offshore P&A work.



During the site visit, staff observed the lift boat currently supporting rig-less plug-and-abandonment activities, as well as the coordinated transfer of personnel





CID Summer Weatherization Inspections Underway

The RRC’s Critical Infrastructure Division (CID) began its annual summer weatherization inspections this month. Summer inspections run from July through September to help keep natural gas flowing for electricity generation so Texans can rely on steady power during peak summer demand.

CID teams are reviewing heat-mitigation measures at key points in the natural gas supply chain, including pipelines that serve power plants and gas processing facilities. This work supports the state’s broader resiliency efforts and complements CID’s winter weatherization program and biennial Emergency Operations Plan reviews.

To support operators, CID also hosted two remote informational webinars this year, giving companies guidance on EOP submissions. These sessions, along

with ongoing collaboration with industry experts and field staff, help strengthen statewide readiness.

Created following the passage of SB 3, CID continues its mission to enhance Texas’ energy reliability in every season.







SMRD and OGC Gain Insight into Calvert Mine Operations

On June 24, 2026, staff from the Surface Mining and Reclamation Division (SMRD) and the Office of General Counsel (OGC) participated in a One Agency, One Team field visit to the Calvert Mine in Robertson County. New hires and interns joined senior engineers, geologists and inspectors for a full-day, in-depth look at active surface mining and reclamation operations. Guided by the mining company's environmental manager, the group toured the expansive site to observe mining equipment, lignite stockpiles and ongoing extraction activities.

A key highlight of the day was a drone inspection demonstration led by Robert MacNabb, SMRD Drone Program Project Manager. Using the Commission's drone, attendees viewed the mine from above and saw how aerial inspections enhance both safety and efficiency in regulatory oversight.

For many participants, the scale and complexity of the operation were especially memorable. As OGC's Andrew noted, "I was most impressed by the size of the equipment and the scale of the operation. In a way, it reminded me of children's construction sites but with gargantuan excavators, bulldozers and dump trucks. I also enjoyed seeing the beauty of the reclaimed land."

The visit provided valuable insight into the role of lignite mining in Texas' electrical power generation, the RRC's implementation of the Texas Coal Mining Regulations and the commitment Texas mining operators demonstrate to high-quality reclamation.

The Commission extends its appreciation to the Calvert Mine team for their hospitality and for supporting this hands-on learning opportunity.



See You in Austin: The 2026 RRC Regulatory Conference is Almost Here

The 2026 RRC Regulatory Conference is taking place this month, and we can't wait to welcome everyone to Austin. With more than 1,000 registrations, this year's conference is shaping up to be our largest yet. We're excited to bring industry leaders together to strengthen the systems that keep Texas at the forefront of energy production.

Over three days, attendees will hear from 3 special guests at 2 keynote sessions, dive into 80 breakout sessions packed with regulatory updates and practical guidance while connecting with over 50 exhibitors highlighting tools, technology and services that support safe, efficient operations across the state. It's one of the best opportunities of the year for operators to meet face-to-face with RRC experts, ask questions, share insights and stay ahead of the latest laws, rules and compliance procedures.

Registered to attend the conference? Use this link to download the conference mobile app from your app store:

DOWNLOAD NOW

If you would rather have all the convenience and information found on the conference mobile app without another download, visit the Attendee Hub website at this link:

VISIT WEBSITE

Use the Attendee Hub app or website to build a personalized conference agenda, download breakout session presentations and connect with others at the conference.



Texas Energy on Track: Marking a Milestone

Texas Energy on Track, the Railroad Commission of Texas' (RRC) official podcast, is celebrating one year of connecting Texans with the people and work behind the state's energy regulation. Airing every other Wednesday across all major podcast platforms, the show has quickly become a valuable tool for transparency, education and public engagement.

Since its launch in June 2025, it has offered listeners a rare window into the expertise, daily operations and public service mission of one of Texas' oldest and most influential regulatory agencies.



Hosted by Bryce Dubee and Nick Kraynok, the show features conversations with RRC subject-matter experts, district leadership and frontline staff.

Together, they provide a behind-the-scenes look at the Commission's divisions and the day-to-day work that drives each one.

Texas Energy on Track brings clarity to the Commission's work by breaking down complex regulatory processes, highlighting ongoing modernization efforts and showcasing the professionals who keep Texas' energy systems safe and reliable.



The podcast also reinforces the RRC's long standing mission, stewardship of natural resources, protection of public and community safety and support for economic vitality, in a format accessible to anyone with a phone and twenty minutes.

As the show enters its exciting second year, we invite you to join the thousands of listeners who have tuned in to learn more about how the RRC helps keep Texas Energy on Track!



EPISODE 22: CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE DIVISION SUMMER INSPECTIONS

In this episode of *Texas Energy on Track*, host Bryce Dubee and co-host Nick Kraynok talk with Gilbert Herrera, Field Operations Director for the Critical Infrastructure Division. The discussion includes what inspectors look for, how summer and winter inspections differ, the importance of critical facilities and more!



Stay Connected with the RRC

Stay informed between newsletter editions by following the Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC) on social media.



RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS

THROWBACK THURSDAY

BIG LAKE OIL COMPANY BARBECUE

42 likes

#ThrowbackThursday
This 1926 photo captures the annual Big Lake Oil Company barbecue in Texon, Texas, where employees and their families gathered to commemorate the discovery of the Santa

View all 7 comments

Instagram

RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS

412 DRILLING PERMITS were issued by the RRC in November. Each application was reviewed to ensure safe and responsible oil and gas development across Texas.

42 likes

The RRC issued 412 drilling permits in November. Each application was reviewed to ensure safe and responsible oil and gas development across Texas.

View all 7 comments

RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS

REGISTERED? DOWNLOAD THE RRC REGULATORY CONFERENCE APP TODAY

42 likes

The 2026 RRC Regulatory Conference is just weeks away! We look forward to connecting with everyone in July! New this year, attendees can download the official conference app

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COMMISSIONERS' CORNER



COMMISSIONER CHRISTIAN



Commissioner Wayne Christian attended the 2026 Republican Party of Texas Convention in June, where he met with statewide elected officials, candidates and delegates to advocate for the state's oil and natural gas industry. He also delivered remarks during the convention's general sessions and at Senate caucus meetings, underscoring the sector's role in the U.S. economy and national security. Christian said engagement with party leaders and grassroots delegates helps shape policy discussions and ensures energy issues remain a priority heading into Texas' 90th legislative session next year.



In an op-ed in the *Austin American-Statesman*, Christian urged Austin leaders to reject proposed moratoriums on data center development, warning that such pauses would hinder economic growth, energy leadership and long-term infrastructure planning. He said Texas is already succeeding in pairing innovation with responsible regulation rather than restricting development to manage rising demand. With artificial intelligence, cloud computing and digital services driving higher electricity and water use, he called for continued dedicated power generation, the use of produced water and closed-loop water-cooling systems to drive responsible data center construction.

Christian also called for regulatory relief for small and marginal oil producers in a *Washington Examiner* op-ed, saying federal rules often fail to distinguish between family-owned operators and large multinational companies, placing disproportionate strain on independents. He said marginal wells are critical to rural Texas economies, affordable energy supplies and U.S. energy security and urged Congress to take action to reduce regulatory burdens and strengthen domestic production.



COMMISSIONER CRADDICK

The Railroad Commission made headlines earlier this month with its announcement to begin plugging a series of difficult and complex orphaned wells in the coastal waters of Baffin Bay.

The Railroad Commission's work along our coast demonstrates an important part of our mission: protecting Texas communities and natural resources while maintaining the highest standards of environmental stewardship.

These wells present unique technical challenges due to their location and condition. Thanks to the expertise of our State Managed Plugging Program, the Commission can address these complex sites safely and effectively.

As noted in the original announcement, the Commission has already plugged nearly 1,700 orphaned wells this fiscal year, adding to the more than 47,000 wells plugged statewide since the program began in 1984.

Every orphaned well we plug helps protect Texans, safeguard the environment, and preserve public confidence in the responsible development of our state's energy resources.

At the Railroad Commission, we remain committed to addressing legacy challenges while ensuring Texas continues to lead the world in energy production and environmental responsibility.

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](#)