

**RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS
HEARINGS DIVISION**

OIL AND GAS DOCKET NO. 7B-0284006

ENFORCEMENT ACTION FOR ALLEGED VIOLATIONS COMMITTED BY FRONTIER OPERATING CORPORATION (287189), AS TO THE TRUST "BS&F" UNIT LEASE, WELL NO. 1 (159748), GATLIN (CADDO) FIELD, SHACKELFORD COUNTY, TEXAS

FINAL ORDER

The Commission finds that after statutory notice the captioned enforcement proceeding was heard by the examiner on January 16, 2014, and that the respondent, Frontier Operating Corporation (287189), failed to appear or respond to the Notice of Opportunity for Hearing. Pursuant to § 1.49 of the Commission's General Rules of Practice and Procedure [Tex. R. R. Comm'n, 16 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 1.49] and after being duly submitted to the Railroad Commission of Texas at conference held in its offices in Austin, Texas, the Commission makes the following findings of fact and conclusions of law.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Frontier Operating Corporation (287189), ("Respondent"), was given Notice of Opportunity for Hearing by certified mail, addressed to the most recent Form P-5 (Organization Report) address, which was signed.
2. The certified envelope containing the Original Complaint and the Notice of Opportunity for Hearing, was delivered on November 25, 2013 to the most recent P-5 address. The certified electronic tracking receipt is included in the file and has been on file with the Commission for 15 days, exclusive of the day of receipt and day of issuance.
3. On September 21, 2012, Respondent, a Corporation, filed an Organization Report (Form P-5) with the Commission reporting that its owner(s) consisted of the following individual(s): John Ayers; President.
4. John Ayers, was a person in a position of ownership or control of respondent, as defined by Texas Natural Resources Code Section 91.114, during the time period of the violations of Commission rules committed by respondent.
5. The violations of Commission rules committed by respondent are related to safety and the control of pollution.

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6. Respondent designated itself to the Commission as the operator of Well No. 1 (159748) on the Trust "BS&F" Unit Lease ("subject well"/"subject lease") by filing a P-4 Form (Producers Transportation Authority and Certificate of Compliance) effective on November 1, 1997.
7. Respondent's P-5 (Organization Report) became delinquent on July 1, 2013. Respondent had a \$50,000 Letter of Credit as its financial assurance at the time of its last P-5 renewal.
8. Production from the subject lease ceased in March 2010.
9. The Statewide 14b2 plugging extension for Well No. 1 (159748) on the Trust "BS&F" Unit Lease was denied on June 30, 2003 for an inactive P-5.
10. The subject well has not been properly plugged in accordance with, and is not otherwise in compliance with, Statewide Rule 14.
11. Usable quality groundwater in the area is likely to be contaminated by migrations or discharges of saltwater and other oil and gas wastes from the subject well. Unplugged wellbores constitute a cognizable threat to the public health and safety because of the probability of pollution.
12. The total estimated cost to the State for plugging Well No. 1 (159748) on the Trust "BS&F" Unit Lease is \$21,200.00.
13. Commission District inspections were conducted on March 18, 2013, April 29, 2013 and June 3, 2013 for the Trust "BS&F" Unit Lease. The signs or identification required to be posted at the lease entrance and the tank battery were missing, and were faded and unable to read at the wellsite.
14. Failure to properly identify a well by the posting of the sign required by Statewide Rule 3 has the potential for causing confusion and delay in remedying a violation or emergency and poses a threat to the public health and safety.
15. Commission District inspections were conducted on March 18, 2013, April 29, 2013 and June 3, 2013 for the Trust "BS&F" Unit Lease. There was hydrocarbon soaked soil affecting a 6' x 18" x 6" deep area at the bottom of a steel tank at the tank battery.
16. No permit has been issued to Respondent for the discharge of oil and gas wastes on or from the subject lease.
17. The unpermitted discharges of oil and gas wastes or other substances or materials on the subject lease constitute a hazard to public health and safety because leaks and spills of oil and produced waters onto soils can migrate into surface water bodies causing contamination or can leach into the ground and percolate through soils into groundwater supplies.

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18. Commission District inspections were conducted on March 18, 2013, April 29, 2013 and June 3, 2013 for the Trust "BS&F" Unit Lease. The firewalls have weathered down around the steel 210 barrel tank, which is 230' north of CR 181.
19. The Respondent has not demonstrated good faith since it failed to timely plug or otherwise place the subject leases and subject well in compliance after being notified of the violations by the District Office and failed to appear at the hearing to explain its inaction.
20. Respondent has a prior history of Commission rule violations including the following docket(s):

Docket No. 7B-0260890; Final Order Served: September 1, 2009.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. Proper notice was issued by the Railroad Commission to respondent and to all other appropriate persons legally entitled to notice.
2. All things necessary to the Commission attaining jurisdiction over the subject matter and the parties in this hearing have been performed or have occurred.
3. Respondent is in violation of Commission Statewide Rules 3, 8(d)(1), 14(b)(2) and 21(j).
4. Respondent is responsible for maintaining the subject lease in compliance with Statewide Rule 3, which requires that each property that produces oil, gas or geothermal resources and each oil, gas or geothermal resource well and tank, or other approved crude oil measuring facility shall post signs or identification.
5. Respondent is responsible for maintaining the subject lease in compliance with Statewide Rule 8(d)(1), which prohibits the discharge of oil and gas wastes without a permit.
6. Respondent is responsible for maintaining the subject lease in compliance with Statewide Rule 21(j), which requires that fire walls must be erected and kept around all permanent oil tanks, or battery of tanks, that are within the corporate limits of any city, town or village; or where such tanks are closer than 500' to any highway.
7. Respondent is responsible for maintaining the subject lease and subject well in compliance with all applicable Commission rules according to Statewide Rules 14, 58, and 79 and Chapters 89 and 91 of the Texas Natural Resources Code.
8. The documented violations committed by the respondent constitute acts deemed serious, a hazard to the public health, and demonstrate a lack of good faith pursuant to TEX. NAT. RES. CODE ANN. §81.0531.

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9. As a person in a position of ownership or control of respondent at the time respondent violated Commission rules related to safety and the control of pollution, John Ayers, and any other organization in which he may hold a position of ownership or control, shall be subject to the restrictions of Texas Natural Resource Code Section 91.114(a)(2) for a period of no more than seven years from the date the order entered in this matter becomes final, or until the conditions that constituted the violations herein are corrected or are being corrected in accordance with a schedule to which the Commission and the organization have agreed; and all administrative, civil, and criminal penalties and all cleanup and plugging costs incurred by the State relating to those conditions are paid or are being paid in accordance with a schedule to which the Commission and the organization have agreed, whichever is earlier.

IT IS ORDERED THAT within 30 days from the day immediately following the date this order becomes final:

1. Frontier Operating Corporation (287189), shall plug the Trust "BS&F" Unit Lease, Well No. 1 (159748), Gatlin (Caddo) Field, Shackelford County, Texas in compliance with applicable Commission rules and regulations; and
2. Frontier Operating Corporation (287189), shall pay to the Railroad Commission of Texas, for disposition as provided by law, an administrative penalty in the amount of **THIRTEEN THOUSAND ONE HUNDRED TWELVE DOLLARS (\$13,112.00)**.

It is further **ORDERED** by the Commission that this order shall not be final and effective until 20 days after a party is notified of the Commission's order. A party is presumed to have been notified of the Commission's order three days after the date on which the notice is actually mailed. If a timely motion for rehearing is filed by any party at interest, this order shall not become final and effective until such motion is overruled, or if such motion is granted, this order shall be subject to further action by the Commission. Pursuant to TEX. GOV'T CODE § 2001.146(e), the time allotted for Commission action on a motion for rehearing in this case prior to its being overruled by operation of law, is hereby extended until 90 days from the date the parties are notified of the order.

All requested findings of fact and conclusions of law which are not expressly adopted herein are denied. All pending motions and requests for relief not previously granted or granted herein are denied.

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Noncompliance with the provisions of this order is subject to enforcement by the Attorney General and subject to civil penalties of up to \$10,000.00 per day per violation.

Done this 12th day of August 2014.

RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS

(Signatures affixed by Default Master Order
dated August 12, 2014)

LMV/sa