

**RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS  
HEARINGS DIVISION**

**OIL AND GAS DOCKET NO. 09-0292042**

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**ENFORCEMENT ACTION FOR ALLEGED VIOLATIONS COMMITTED BY AGAINST UTILITY VENTURES COMPANY (879510) FOR VIOLATIONS OF STATEWIDE RULES ON THE 4P BAR RANCH (23683) LEASE, WELL NO. 1, COUGAR (MISS LIME) FIELD, ARCHER COUNTY, TEXAS**

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**FINAL ORDER**

The Commission finds that after statutory notice the captioned enforcement proceeding was heard by the examiner on January 8, 2015 and that the respondent, Utility Ventures Company (879510), 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. Utility Ventures Company (879510), ("Respondent"), was given Notice of Opportunity for Hearing by certified mail, addressed to the most recent Form P-5 (Organization Report) address.
2. The certified envelope containing the Original Complaint and the Notice of Opportunity for Hearing, was returned to the Commission marked "return to sender" on December 15, 2014. The certified envelope 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 November 2, 2011, Respondent, a Corporation, filed an Organization Report (Form P-5) with the Commission reporting that its officers consisted of the following individual(s): Louis Purvis; President.
4. Louis Purvis, was a person in a position of ownership or control of respondent, as defined by Texas Natural Resource Code Section 91.114, during the time period of the violations of Commission rules committed by respondent.

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5. The violations of Commission rules committed by respondent are related to safety and the control of pollution.
6. Respondent designated itself to the Commission as the operator of Well No. 1 on the 4P Bar Ranch (23683) Lease ("subject well"/"subject lease") by filing a Form P-4 (Producers Transportation Authority and Certificate of Compliance) effective on August 24, 2010.
7. Respondent's P-5 (Organization Report) became delinquent on August 1, 2012. Respondent had a \$50,000 Bond as its financial assurance at the time of its last P-5 renewal.
8. The subject well has not been properly plugged in accordance with, and is not otherwise in compliance with, Statewide Rule 14.
9. Production from Well No. 1 on the on the 4P Bar Ranch (23683) Lease ceased in October 2007.
10. 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.
11. The Statewide Rule 14(b)(2) plugging extension for Well No. 1 on the 4P Bar Ranch (23683) Lease was denied on April 2, 2010 for failure to file an H-15.
12. Commission District inspections were conducted on May 30, 2013 for the 4P Bar Ranch (23683) Lease. The signs or identification required to be posted at the lease entrance failed to identify the current operator and was missing at Well No. 1.
13. 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.
14. Commission records indicate that the 4P Bar Ranch (23683) Lease is completed in a field which has been classified by the Commission as a hydrogen sulfide (H<sub>2</sub>S) field subject to the requirements of Statewide Rule 36. According to Commission records, the subject lease was transferred to Respondent via Commission Form P-4 (Certificate of Compliance and Transportation Authority), effective August 24, 2010. On September 2, 2010, the Commission gave Respondent written notice that the 4P Bar Ranch (23683) Lease is in a designated hydrogen sulfide field and subject to the requirements of Statewide Rule 36. Respondent was further advised that the Certificate of Compliance regarding Statewide Rule 36 is not transferable and that Respondent is required to certificate the operation by filing a Commission Form H-9 within thirty days of receipt of said notice. Respondent failed to certificate the Operation and file a Commission Form H-9.

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15. The Respondent has not demonstrated good faith since it failed to properly plug otherwise place the subject lease 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.

### **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, 14(b)(2) and 36(d)(1)(M).
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 36(d)(1)(M), which requires that a new operator of a system or any acquired element of a system or operation shall be required to certificate that operation.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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, Louis Purvis, 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.

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

1. Utility Ventures Company (879510), shall plug the 4P Bar Ranch (23683) Lease, Well No. 1, Cougar (Miss Lime) Field, Archer County, Texas in compliance with applicable Commission rules and regulations; and
2. Utility Ventures Company (879510), shall pay to the Railroad Commission of Texas, for disposition as provided by law, an administrative penalty in the amount of **TWELVE THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED SIXTY DOLLARS (\$12,260.00)**.

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.

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 6th of October 2015.

**RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS**

(Signatures affixed by Default Master Order dated October 6, 2015)

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