

OCTOBER 2026



ENERGY NEWS



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LETTER FROM THE RRC

ENERGY NEWS

Welcome to the October edition of *Energy News*.

This month, the RRC celebrates national recognition for its Abandoned Mine Land reclamation work, continues to set records in statewide well-plugging performance and welcomes Government Relations Director.

RRC Leadership shared regulatory insights at the 2026 Permian Energy Dialogue and met with the New Zealand Ambassador to discuss international energy policy. RRC experts also participated in the Onshore Wellsite Facilities Conference, contributing technical perspectives and industry collaboration.

Each event reflects the agency's ongoing commitment to strengthening safety, supporting responsible development and engaging partners at every level to advance Texas' energy future.



RRC Receives OSMRE Small Project Award for Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation

The RRC was honored to receive the 2026 Small Project Award from the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) for exemplary work addressing public safety and environmental risks associated with historic mining activity in Wise County. The award was presented during an Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Awards ceremony at the 2026 National Association of AML Programs conference in Park City, Utah, on September 21. The award highlights the RRC's dedication to safeguarding communities and advancing environmental stewardship throughout Texas.

The Commission earned this recognition for its work in Wise County, where the RRC's Surface Mining and Reclamation Division successfully reclaimed an abandoned mine portal beneath a residence in

Bridgeport, Texas. Over the years, shifting underground mine conditions and storm-water runoff caused structural collapse and damaged nearby sewer lines, prompting an emergency response from SMRD to stabilize the site and eliminate hazards for the property owner and the surrounding community. The Wise Richey Abandoned Mine Land Emergency Project began on February 18, 2026, and was completed on March 6, 2026.

"This project exemplifies our commitment to protecting the safety of Texans and the environment while fulfilling the goals of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act," said RRC Executive Director Wei Wang. "By addressing critical health and safety risks, improving environmental conditions and engaging the local community, this effort demonstrates the meaningful

impact our work can have on the people and places we serve. We are proud to accept this award and appreciate OSM for the opportunity.”

The annual Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Awards highlight projects across the country that remediate hazards left by legacy coal mines and affected areas, returning them to safe and beneficial use. Texas received the award alongside four other distinguished projects during the ceremony. The RRC was recognized in 2022 with a Small Project Award for successfully reclaiming a century old, abandoned mine in East Texas.

The RRC’s Abandoned Mine Land Program is a fully federally funded initiative that implements Title IV of the federal Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977. Through the program, the Commission restores land and water resources impacted by pre SMCRA mining practices, safeguarding the public and strengthening environmental resilience in communities across Texas. Through this program, the RRC works diligently to reclaim land and water resources, protect the public from the adverse effects of historical mining practices, and contribute to the long-term health and prosperity of Texas communities.







RRC Hits New Record in Tackling Orphaned Wells

Protecting public safety and the environment remained a top RRC priority in Fiscal Year 2026, with the Commission plugging more than 2,000 orphaned wells statewide, exceeding the Performance Measure set by the Texas Legislature by 300 wells or 18.9%.

Operators responsibly plug approximately 86% of oil and gas wells. However, orphaned wells are inactive, non-compliant wells that have been inactive for a minimum of 12 months, and the responsible operator's Organizational Report (Form P-5) has been delinquent for greater than 12 months.

When a well is designated as orphaned, the RRC assumes responsibility for monitoring it and oversees its plugging through supervised contractors. The agency prioritizes high-risk wells first, scoring each site based on age, location, condition and potential environmental impact to protect local communities.

During the last fiscal year, the RRC plugged 2,022 wells at a cost of \$125,643,478. Funding for well-plugging activities comes from multiple sources, including federal and state appropriations and contributions from the oil and natural gas industry. These industry contributions are made directly through the RRC's Oil and Gas Regulation and Cleanup Fund and indirectly through production taxes deposited into the General Revenue Fund. The RRC works with the Attorney General, Comptroller's Office and collection agencies to seek reimbursements of public funds from the operator of record.

"Protecting Texas land and groundwater requires decisive action. Our fiscal year 2026 accomplishments demonstrate the RRC's firm dedication to environmental and public safety," stated Wei Wang, Executive Director of the RRC. "We are grateful to the Texas Legislature for its continued funding, which enables us to address high-priority orphan wells effectively. Through the responsible allocation of these resources, the RRC continues to advance efforts to eliminate hazards permanently and safeguard Texas's environment for future generations."

During the previous legislative session, several measures were enacted to address orphaned wells, including SB 1146, which streamlines the process for operators to plug orphaned wells on or near their leases, and SB 1150, which requires operators to plug wells that are over 25 years old and have been inactive for at least 15 years.

For more information on the RRC's award-winning well-plugging program and related efforts, visit: <https://www.rrc.texas.gov/oil-and-gas/environmental-cleanup-programs/>.



RRC Welcomes New Government Relations Director

The RRC is pleased to announce that Worth Farabee has joined the agency as its new Government Relations Director.

In this role, Farabee will serve as the Commission's liaison to state leadership and members of the Texas Legislature on policy matters affecting the agency, as well as constituent affairs.

The Government Relations Division plays a vital role in advancing the RRC's mission, particularly during legislative sessions. The team monitors legislation and policy developments that may affect the agency and the industries under its jurisdiction, while fostering communication with state leaders and other stakeholders.

Farabee brings nearly two decades of experience in legislative affairs, appropriations and government relations, along with extensive knowledge of the legislative process and Texas state government. He will work closely with the Commissioners, agency leadership, legislators, industry representatives and stakeholders on legislative and policy matters affecting the RRC's oversight of the state's

natural resources and environment.

"Worth brings extensive experience and a deep understanding of the legislative process that will greatly benefit the Commission," said RRC Executive Director Wei Wang. "We are excited to welcome him to the RRC and look forward to the leadership and expertise he will bring as we continue to strengthen our team."

Prior to joining the RRC, Farabee served as Assistant Vice Chancellor for State Governmental Relations for the Texas Tech University System. In that role, he represented the System before state leaders and the Texas Legislature and advanced legislative, budget and policy priorities on behalf of its institutions.

A graduate of Texas Tech University, Farabee began his career in Texas state government in 2011 and has worked through eight legislative sessions at the Texas Capitol. His experience includes serving on the staff of several former members of the Texas House of Representatives, including Rep. Lynn Stucky, Rep. Jim Keffer, Speaker Joe Straus and Rep. John Davis.



Photo courtesy of Permian Basin Energy Dialogue

RRC Executive Director Wei Wang Speaks at 2026 Permian Energy Dialogue

The 2026 Permian Energy Dialogue, held September 15–16 in Austin, brought together producers, midstream companies, water and technology partners, regulators and financial stakeholders to advance cross-sector solutions across the Permian Basin.

The regional forum focused on strengthening infrastructure, advancing water stewardship and supporting lower-emission pathways while addressing the Basin's broader role in global energy security. Participants explored opportunities to build collaboration, develop coalitions and identify effective strategies for the future of energy in the Permian and beyond.

RRC Executive Director Wei Wang participated in a fireside chat titled “A Texas Perspective on Regulatory Alignment in the Permian.” The discussion examined how improved interagency coordination and clearer regulatory frameworks could support infrastructure development, permitting, operational planning, water management and growing power demand.

Thank you to the organizers and participants for fostering a thoughtful discussion on regulatory alignment, infrastructure development, water stewardship and the future of energy in the Permian Basin.



RRC Welcomes New Zealand Ambassador for Energy Policy Discussion

On September 3, Commissioner Jim Wright and RRC leadership met with New Zealand Ambassador to the United States, Chris Seed, at RRC headquarters in Austin to discuss policy developments, economic priorities and issues affecting Texas' energy sector.

The conversation underscored the Commission's role in supporting statewide energy leadership, including efforts to maintain resilient critical infrastructure and help Texas remain a dependable supplier in the global marketplace.

The RRC values opportunities to share the agency's work and exchange perspectives on matters shaping the broader energy landscape in Texas and beyond.

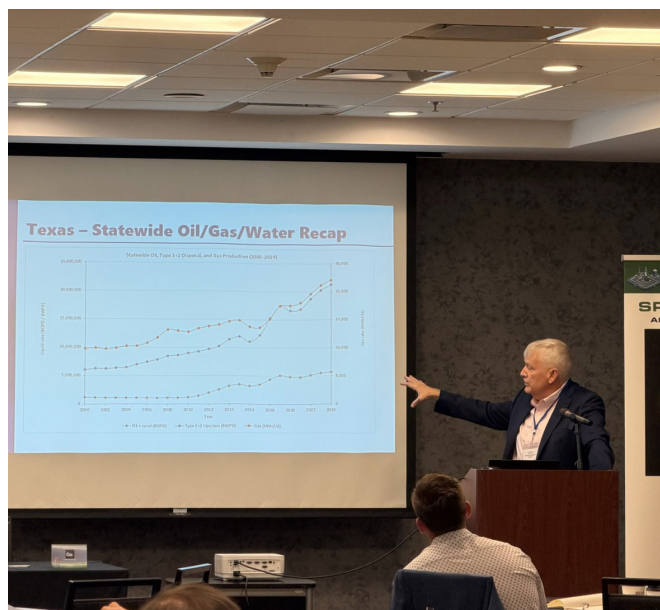


RRC Shares Expertise at Onshore Wellsite Facilities 2026 Conference

RRC staff joined industry leaders in Houston for the Onshore Wellsite Facilities 2026 Conference, contributing to discussions on strengthening infrastructure performance and operational reliability.

Engineering Specialist Denton Sorrells presented alongside Gilbert Herrera, Field Operations Director for the Critical Infrastructure Division, on planning for critical infrastructure vulnerabilities and building resilience through preparedness. The conference also featured insights from RRC Chief Engineer Ted Wooten, who spoke on navigating constraints in produced water disposal, including permitting considerations, shallow-disposal risks and sustainable

water-management capacity. The event gathered operators and technical experts for practical, solutions focused conversations on facility performance, reliability and efficiency.





RRC Drives Energy Awareness and Collaboration Across Texas

As autumn arrives, the agency is ramping up its outreach efforts across Texas, aligning with October's Energy Awareness Month to foster community relationships, inspire the next generation of talent in the workforce and provide valuable energy resources statewide. Our staff has been actively connecting with educators, industry leaders and policymakers to advance Texas' energy future.

Recent engagement highlights include:

- **Workforce Development in Alpine:** RRC Engineering Specialists from the Midland Oil and Gas District Office and the West Region Director for Critical Infrastructure participated in the Sul Ross State University Job Fair. Their presence spotlighted the agency's mission and encouraged talented graduates to consider careers in public service and energy innovation.
- **Educational Partnerships in Tyler:** RRC Public Engagement Coordinator attended the Chapel Hill ISD Employee Fair, connecting with hundreds of local educators to distribute free, hands-on K-12 energy educational resources for the upcoming school year, fostering learning and supporting the next generation of energy professionals.
- **Strengthening Excavation Safety in Tyler:** Nearly 100 excavators, municipal staff, locators and operators attended the September 18 Exca-

vation Safety Day in Tyler. The RRC's Damage Prevention Team hosted a booth and answered questions about excavation-related regulatory requirements. The event also featured Tx811's mascot, Dirty Dee the Donkey, adding a fun touch to the day's safety-focused discussions.

- **Policy Collaboration in Austin:** RRC's Public Engagement Manager represented the agency at the Texas Association of Counties Legislative Conference, engaging with county officials, state legislators, industry experts and policymakers to discuss energy issues and foster collaborative solutions for communities across Texas.

Through these initiatives, the agency continues to strengthen industry connections and equip stakeholders with tools for an evolving energy landscape.





RRC's Monthly Listening Sessions

The RRC's Office of Public Engagement continues its Listening Sessions in a newly expanded format.

These sessions offer the public a way to speak directly to the agency. Each meeting features a brief RRC overview, an open floor for public comment and a panel of subject matter experts from the Oil and Gas Division, Oversight and Safety Division and Surface Mining and Reclamation Division who are ready to answer questions and provide clarification on public comments.

To make participation as accessible as possible, all sessions will be held in person and virtually via Microsoft Teams, with telephone call-in options. Registration is required to participate, whether in person or virtually, and to make comments.

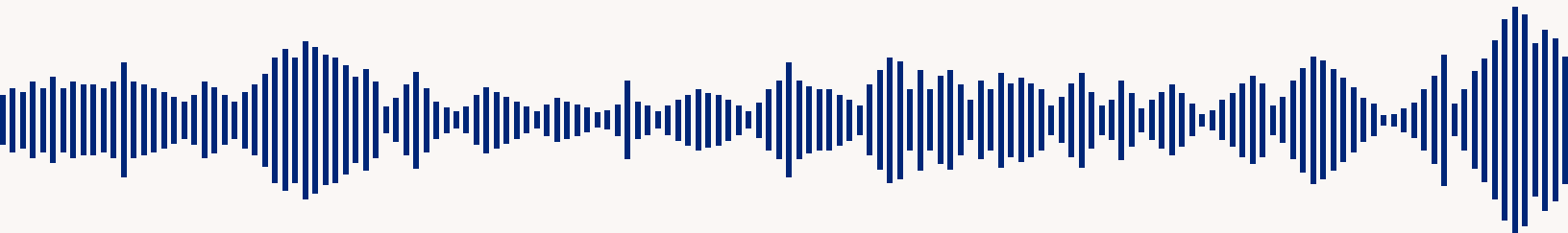
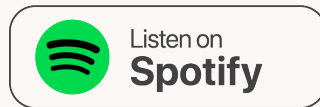
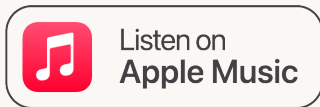
For more information and to register, please visit link below.

REGISTER HERE



TEXAS ENERGY ON TRACK

AN RRC PODCAST



Looking for an informative and accessible way to stay updated on Texas energy developments? Explore the official podcast from the RRC, Texas Energy on Track. New episodes are released every other Wednesday, featuring insightful discussions with agency experts, field updates and stories highlighting ongoing initiatives and activities within the agency. This podcast is a valuable resource for staying informed about the Commission's work and the latest developments in Texas energy.

Head to your favorite platform, including Spotify, Apple Podcasts or YouTube and be sure to subscribe so you never miss an episode!

Episode 27: Finding Out About Flaring

In this episode of Texas Energy on Track, host Bryce Dubee and co-host Nick Kraynok talk with Tim Speer, Engineering Unit Manager and Betsy Peticolas, Environmental Attorney, about flaring. The discussion covers what flaring is, when it's needed and how the RRC regulates it.

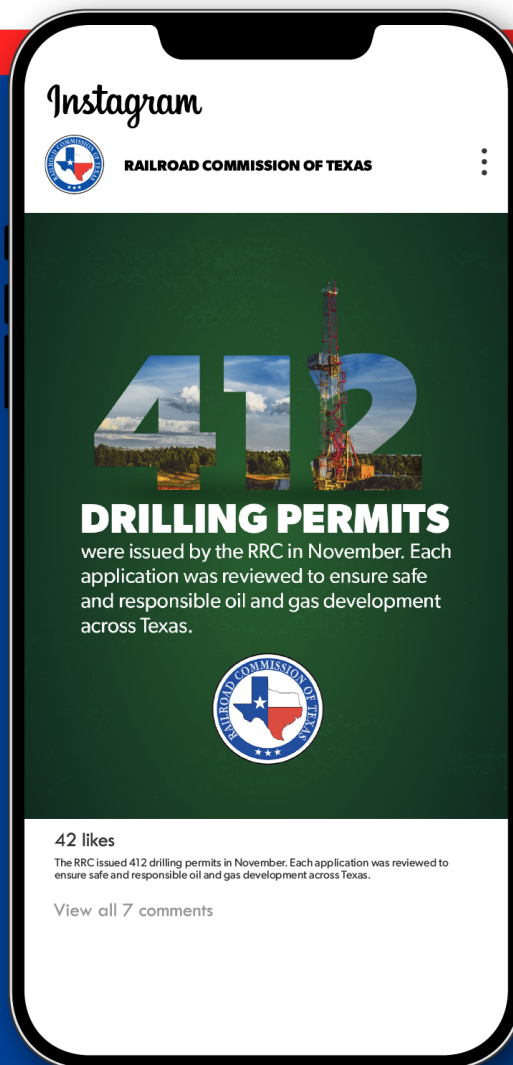
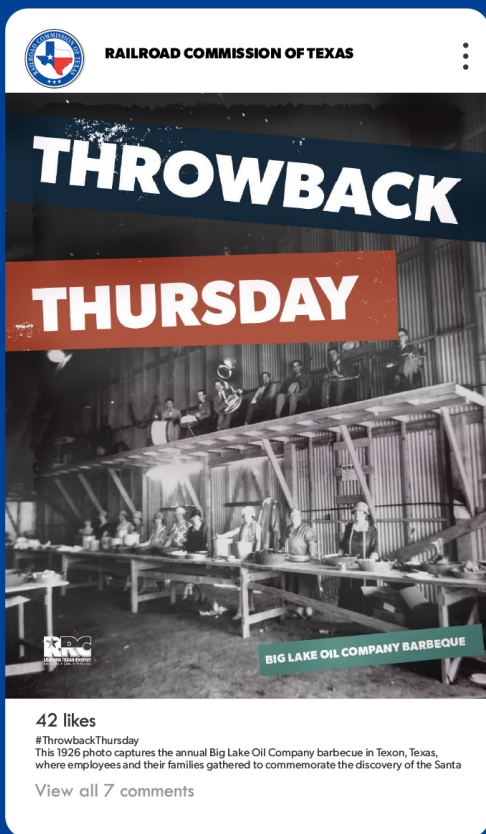
Episode 28: Field Inspector Fire Prevention Training

Host Bryce Dubee sits down with RRC Field Inspectors Robert Myrick and Brad Holt in this episode of Texas Energy on Track, where they discuss a new training initiative with the Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service designed to equip oil and gas inspectors with the practical skills to identify and mitigate wildfire risks and electrical hazards.



Stay connected with the RRC

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



COMMISSIONERS' CORNER



COMMISSIONER CHRISTIAN

In September, RRC Commissioner Wayne Christian opened the September BIZPAC luncheon, where he discussed issues vital to Texas' oil and gas industry with business owners and executives. He also joined the Smart Energy panel at National ACE's 2026 Annual Conference to discuss data centers and how the oil and gas industry can support their responsible development.

Christian also penned the op-ed **"Don't Slam the Door on Data Centers,"** published in the Longview News-Journal and other East Texas newspapers. He argued that Texas should not slam the door on data centers or allow legitimate concerns about their growth to become policies that drive investment out of the state. He outlined how Texas can address concerns about electricity demand, water use and infrastructure while continuing to welcome an industry that brings significant private investment to communities across the state.

Christian was also invited to participate in the 2026 Texas Tribune Festival panel hosted by Texas Bullpen on data centers. There, he advocated for responsible development and called for a "Texas plan" during the upcoming legislative session to reduce regulatory uncertainty, establish safeguards that protect communities and allow private investment to flourish.



OPEN MEETING

TUES. November 17 | 9:30 AM

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

[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](#)