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Search for cause of North Texas earthquakes continues

Published on Sunday, 8 November 2015 22:38 - Written by [Alex Mills, Texas Alliance of Energy Producers](#)



About two years ago, a series of small earthquakes occurred a few miles north of Fort Worth, and there were immediate demands to ban hydraulic fracturing, prohibit drilling of new oil and gas wells, stop all disposal well operations and cease production.

About 800 angry citizens in the towns of Azle and Reno met in the Azle High School auditorium with officials of the Texas Railroad Commission (RRC), which is the primary regulator of oil and gas, to express their theories that the oil and gas industry was the cause of the seismic activity.

News media coverage of the events made the 6 p.m. news and front pages across Texas.

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Southern Methodist University scientists conducted a study and concluded that brine production combined with wastewater disposal represented the "most likely cause of recent seismicity near

Azle."



The RRC responded by hiring a seismologist, who began his investigation into these events.

The RRC also modified its injection and disposal well regulations by requiring more information from

companies seeking a permit.

In June, the RRC conducted hearings and the two companies that have operations in the area, XTO Energy headquartered in Fort Worth and EnerVest in Houston, presented detailed scientific data about their operations and the geology in the area.

The hearing examiners issued two lengthy reports which concluded that "the evidence in the record is insufficient to conclude that injection fluids are escaping from the permitted disposal zones" and the injection wells caused or contributed to the seismic activity.

On Nov. 1, the three RRC commissioners unanimously voted to agree with the hearing examiners in both cases.

Commissioner Ryan Sitton thanked the examiners for doing a "really good job of digging into the technical meat of this issue," saying he supports their effort and agrees with their findings.

The search for the cause of the seismic activity continues. The Texas Legislature passed legislation this year that allocates \$4.5 million to fund a study of seismic activity led by the University of Texas Bureau of Economic Geology.



With the ruling by the RRC it appears that the case in Azle is closed, but the search for answers remains active.

Alex Mills is President of the Texas Alliance of Energy Producers. The opinions expressed are solely of the author.

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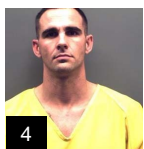
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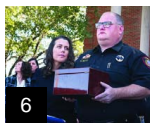
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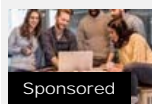
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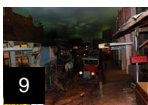


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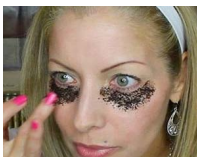


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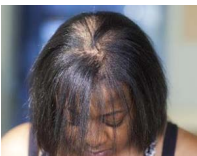
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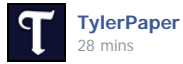




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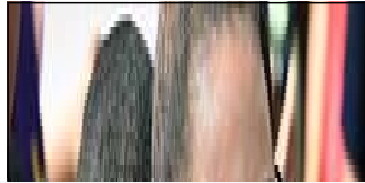


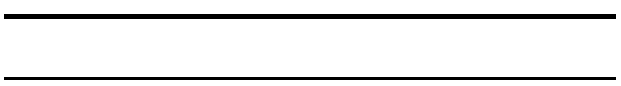
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The third annual School is Cool event is slated for early August, but the school supply drive has already begun.

Last year's event drew more than 4,000 attendees and distributed 1,200 backpacks stuffed with school supplies to needy families.





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