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UT Austin Energy Bulletin February 2017

NEWS



Third annual UT Energy Week explored new technologies, emerging trends, research findings

More than 1,000 people attended [UT Energy Week](#), an annual gathering of experts from academia, industry, government, regulatory agencies and nonprofit organizations, to discuss and debate an assortment of topical energy issues, Feb. 7 – 10, on the UT Austin campus. The conference, now in its third year, is hosted by the [Energy Institute](#), the [KBH Center for Energy, Law & Business](#), and two student-run organizations – the [Longhorn Energy Club](#) and the [Texas Journal of Oil, Gas, and Energy Law](#) – along with support from schools and colleges across the UT Austin campus engaged in energy-related research. [Read more.](#)



Tinker: markets-based approach should serve as model for securing affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy

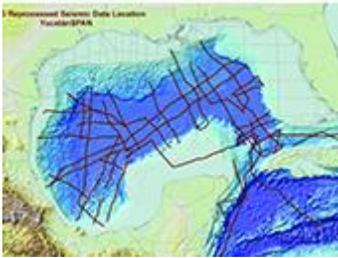
For the past eight years, the primary focus of U.S. energy policy has centered on concerns over climate change and reducing carbon dioxide emissions, often through regulation and rule making, writes Dr. [Scott Tinker](#), director of UT Austin's Bureau of Economic Geology. With a new Administration, however, this focus will likely change to a more market-based approach that seeks a balance between energy, economic, and environmental goals to develop secure energy for America. [Read more.](#)



Spence: markets alone cannot balance conflicting demands for low cost, environmentally sound, and reliable electricity supply

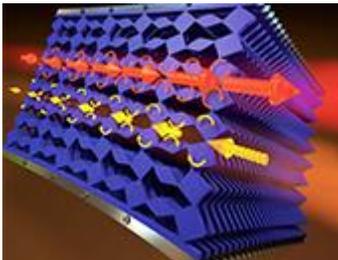
In the 24 states that have deregulated their electricity markets to allow competition, providers have brought down prices while increasing the supply of green energy, says Prof. [David Spence](#), who teaches regulatory law in the McCombs School of Business and School of Law. In an article for the Vanderbilt University Law Review, Spence argues that markets alone are not sufficient to balance society's conflicting demands for a reliable supply of low-cost energy that causes minimal environmental impact. [Read more.](#)

RESEARCH



UT Institute for Geophysics' Gulf of Mexico seismic dataset finally pays off

After nearly 40 years of acquiring and processing seismic data in the Gulf of Mexico to better understand its geology, UT Austin's [Institute for Geophysics](#)' (UTIG) dataset has become a valuable commodity for oil and drilling companies. In 1972, UTIG began recording seismic information in the Gulf, but stopped after 10 years when Mexico shut down foreign research. In 2014, when Mexico announced it would once again allow foreign gas exploration and drilling in its waters, American companies were in need of the information. With the help of UTIG manager [Patricia Ganey-Curry](#), Andrew Hartwig, a geophysicist who earned his B.S. from the [Jackson School of Geosciences](#) in 2009, began to reprocess the data as part of a master's project at the University of Houston. The information subsequently was purchased by seismic services company [ION Geophysical](#), and has brought more than \$4.77 million in royalty payments to UT Austin. The funds will be used for UTIG research grants and to create a fellowship position that promotes research in basin-scale depositional systems. [Read more](#).



New findings suggest breakthrough in mechanical metamaterials can block symmetry of motion

Electrical and Computer Engineering Prof. Dr. [Andrea Alù](#), Research Scientist [Dimitrios Sounas](#) and colleagues at the AMOLF institute in the Netherlands have invented the first mechanical metamaterials capable of transferring motion effortlessly in one direction while blocking it in the other. Their findings, as published Feb. 13 in *Nature*, demonstrate that the material acts as a one-way shield that blocks energy from coming in but easily transmits it going out the other side. Researchers report that breaking the symmetry of motion may enable greater control and efficiency in mechanical systems and mechanical devices. The team hopes to leverage these topological mechanical metamaterials for various applications, optimizing them, and carving devices out of them for applications in soft robotics, prosthetics and energy harvesting. [Read more](#).



Longhorn Energy Club awards prizes for student research during UT Energy Week

Winning entrants in an energy research poster competition organized by the [Longhorn Energy Club](#) during this year's UT Energy Week picked up \$1,000 in four categories: Fossil Fuels and Byproducts, Environmental and Sustainability, Renewable Energy and Storage, and Energy Economics, Law and Policy. All told, more than 30 students participated in the contest. Posters covered a wide range of topics, including development of higher energy density batteries and understanding how air pollution forms from unconventional sources of emissions. [Read more](#) or [watch a video](#).

PEOPLE



Prof. David Allen elected to National Academy of Engineering

UT Austin Chemical Engineering Prof. [David T. Allen](#) has been elected to the prestigious [National Academy of Engineering](#) (NAE) for his contributions to improving air quality and developing sustainable engineering education and practice. The award, which also was conferred upon five [Cockrell School of Engineering](#) alumni, is one of the highest professional distinctions bestowed upon an engineer. The academy honors those who have made outstanding contributions to engineering research and practice, including pioneering new and developing fields of technology and making major advancements in the engineering profession. [Read more.](#)



Karan Jerath tapped for 'Grand Energy Challenge'

UT Austin [Petroleum Engineering](#) sophomore Karan Jerath has been selected by the United Nations as a Young Leader for Sustainable Development Goals. Jerath, who invented a device that can help prevent oil spills, recently was named the youngest member of the Forbes '30 Under 30 Energy' list. With the U.N., Jerath is working with professors and mentors at UT to build "*The Grand Energy Challenge*," an international competition open to high school, undergraduate, and graduate students to pitch ideas related to energy sustainability. [Read more.](#)

EVENTS



KBH Energy Center Lecture on Mexico's Energy Reform March 27, 2017

The KBH Energy Center will host a special lecture, "*Mexico's Energy Regulatory Commission: Challenges and Opportunities in Reforming the Energy Industry*," featuring Guillermo Garcia Alcocer, Chairman, Mexico's Energy Regulatory Commission. The lecture will be held on March 27 from 12-1 p.m. in the McCombs School of Business, [CBA 3.202, Legacy Events Room](#). The event is free, but RSVP is required. [Register here.](#)



Texas Environmental Law Journal Symposium March 24, 2017

The Texas Environmental Law Journal will host its annual spring symposium on Friday, March 24. The theme of this year's event is '*What Comes Next*' – an examination of how the Trump Administration's approach to environmental and energy policies might affect states, cities, environmentalists, and the business community. The event, co-sponsored by the Environmental and Natural Resources Law Section of the State Bar of Texas, will be held at the UT Austin [School of Law](#) on Friday, March 24. Go [here](#) to learn more about the symposium and register.



RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT
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