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Geologist speaks about testing needed to determine cause of local earthquakes

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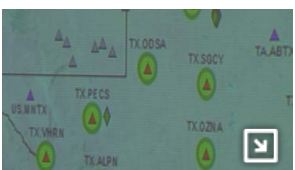
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Locations of stations in the Permian Basin (Source: KWES).

MIDLAND, TX (KWES) - With recent reports of earthquakes in Pecos, experts are not taking it lightly. A geologist talked in Midland Thursday about future testing to better understand what is going on under the ground.

"The subsurface injection of disposal fluids has been connected to fault reactivation in many, many cases," said Dr. Peter Hennings, a research scientist with the University of Texas Bureau of Economic Geology.

Earthquakes were the topic of the conversation in a room full of members of the oil industry, like Clint Walker. He's the chairman of the Permian Basin Petroleum Association (PBPA) and the General Manager of Cudd Energy Services.

"We are trying to get the real data. The information out there so we understand what the issues are," said Walker.

"By this time next year, we'll be focusing all our resources on a study here," said Hennings.



Hennings, the head geologist at the center for Integrated Seismic Research, spoke before the PBPA about seismicity, not only in the Permian Basin, but throughout the state of Texas.

TexNet, a seismic monitoring program, is tasked with finding out what is causing earthquakes. TexNet uses stations that are able to transmit data to Austin for interpretation on whether seismicity in a particular area is increasing or decreasing with time.

"We have systems that automatically provides information about the earthquake location. Myself and my team gets an email when something happens," said Dr. Alexandros Savvaidis, the manager of Texas Seismological Network.

"We are going to be monitoring and studying those earthquakes, so that if need be, mitigation, protective measures can be put into place," said Hennings.

Right now, there are five permanent stations and one portable station in Pecos. In the next couple of months, there will be six more. Pecos is an area geologists want to study because of recent seismicity in the area. In fact, the U.S. Geological Survey reports there was an earthquake in Pecos last Friday.

"The earthquakes that have been reported in Pecos are very small. If you are resident of Pecos and you hear these things or actually feel these things, that's a concern," said Walker.

Most of the stations will be put in place by May, but it will take some time to gather data to have conclusive answers on what is causing the earthquakes.

You can learn more about the existing seismic stations at <http://www.beg.utexas.edu/texnet>.

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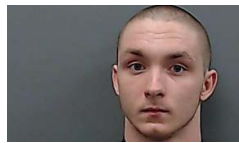
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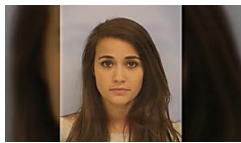
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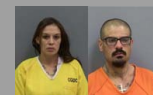


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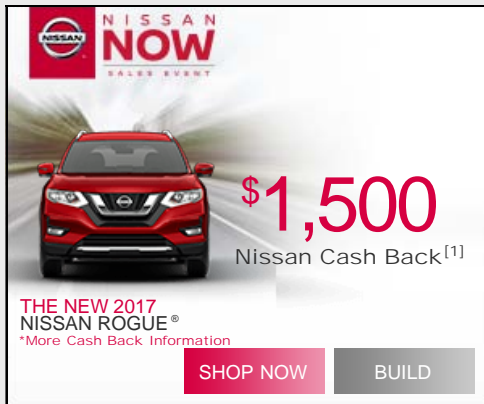
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