

San Antonio Business Journal

Earthquakes continue to strike Eagle Ford

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U.S. Geological Survey

U.S. Geological Survey confirmed a 2.8-magnitude earthquake took place near Las Moras Creek and County Road 204 a few miles northwest of Falls City just before 9:30 a.m. Tuesday.

Low-magnitude earthquakes continue to plague a patch of the Eagle Ford Shale just southeast of San Antonio.

The U.S. Geological Survey confirmed a 2.8-magnitude earthquake took place near Las Moras Creek and County Road 204 a few miles northwest of Falls City, just before 9:30 a.m. Tuesday.

Karnes County Sheriff [Dwayne Villarreal](#) told the Business Journal that his office did not received any reports about the earthquake or any damage from it.

Falls City is not alone. Things have quieted since a rash of earthquakes in 2015, but five low-magnitude tremors have been reported within a 90-mile radius of San Antonio over the past year.

The most recent tremors were a 2.9-magnitude quake that hit near the Fayette County town of Flatonia in October and a 3.0-magnitude quake reported near the Karnes County town of Panna Maria in July.

USGS data shows that nearly three dozen earthquakes ranging from magnitudes of 2.5 to 4.8 have hit cities to the south and east of San Antonio since 1983. Seismic activity in the region shot up dramatically after 2008.

Although there is currently no data to indicate that the Falls City earthquake was manmade, past scientific studies have shown that other earthquakes in the region were caused by the activity of saltwater disposal wells, which are used to inject oil and gas drilling wastewater deep underground at high volumes and pressures.

As the agency that regulates the oil and gas industry, the Railroad Commission of Texas has taken leadership over the issue. Railroad Commissioner [Ryan Sitton](#) led efforts for the agency in November 2014 to adopt stricter rules and penalties for saltwater disposal well operators in areas prone to seismic activity.

Since then, the agency has received 114 disposal well applications in those area. Some 60 permits were issued with special conditions, such as requirements to reduce maximum daily injection volumes and pressure and/or to record volumes and pressures daily as opposed to monthly. Fifteen applications were returned or withdrawn. Six applications were protested and sent to hearing. Twelve permits were issued without special conditions, and 21 applications remain pending.

In a Tuesday morning statement, Railroad Commission spokeswoman [Ramona Nye](#) said the agency is continuing its collaboration with the University of Texas at Austin's Bureau of Economic Geology on the implementation of its TexNet program. The program has added more earthquake monitors across the state to collect more seismic data and gather more precise information.

"This data will help scientists and the Railroad Commission better understand seismicity and induced seismicity in Texas," Nye said in her statement.



Sergio Chapa

Reporter

San Antonio Business Journal