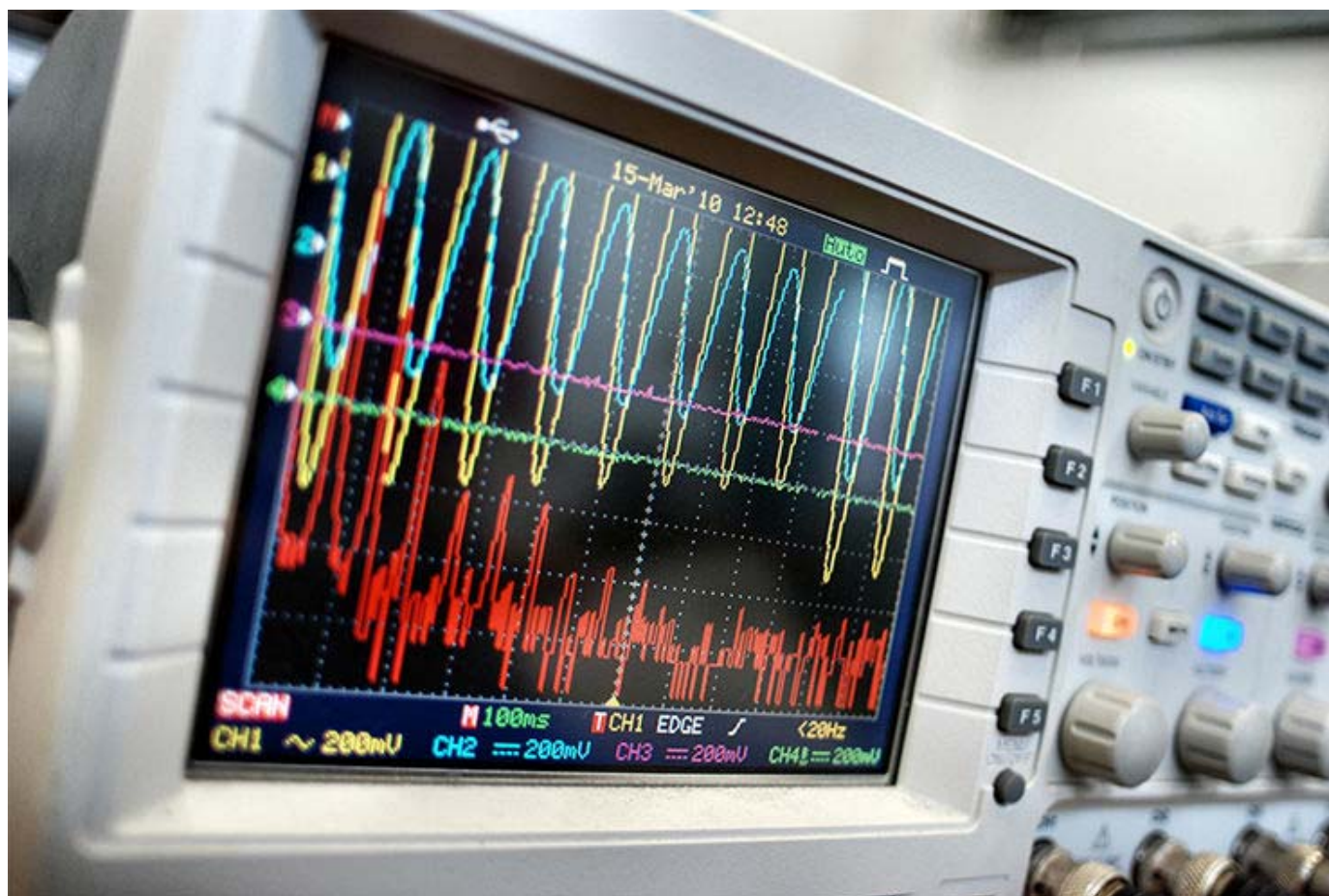


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New System Monitors Texas Earthquakes

posted by iHeartMedia's Corey Olson - 3 hours ago



Texas leaders are hoping to learn a lot more about earthquakes--and in particular what role oil and gas fracking plays in them--through a new statewide system. TexNet (<http://www.beg.utexas.edu/texnet>), established through state funding at the University of Texas-Austin, is described as the nation's most advanced state-run seismic monitoring system. It includes 22 permanent monitoring stations and another 40 portable monitors that can be placed at various locations across the state.

The TexNet system was developed in part due to rising concerns about increasing numbers of small earthquakes in areas of Texas and Oklahoma near oil and gas drilling sites. Specifically, the process of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, which blasts water underground to help release shale. While fracking's

environmental benefits (<https://ktrh.iheart.com/content/2017-10-06-fracking-has-cut-more-co2-emissions-than-all-renewable-energy-combined/>) have been touted, it has also been linked to an increase in seismic activity in certain regions.

Dr. Scott Tinker (<http://www.beg.utexas.edu/people/scott-tinker>), director of UT's Bureau of Economic Geology, says most people misunderstand fracking and its potential impact on seismic activity. "It's not the drilling, it's the disposal of produced waters," he tells KTRH. That underground wastewater is what could be a factor in earthquakes. "What we see with about 7,500 disposal wells in Texas is maybe 10 to 20, on that range, which are potentially associated with earthquakes," says Tinker. He adds that, contrary to some misperceptions, the oil and gas industry is fully supportive of and cooperative with the effort.

The ultimate goal of TexNet, according to Tinker, is to work together to find answers, rather than finger-point. "We've got 50-plus new seismometers that will help understand the baseline, and then help us look at changes going forward, to make sure we can understand if, in fact, human activity is causing these, and how to minimize the damage from that," he says.

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