



Odessa American, Texas

# Water in Energy Conference attracts the experts

**Ruth Campbell, Odessa American, Texas**

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Feb. 3—Complete with high-powered speakers, the Permian Basin Water in Energy Conference kicks off Feb. 28 and runs through March 2.

A welcome reception will be held Feb. 28 at the University of Texas Permian Basin College of Engineering building. The actual conference is March 1 and 2 at the Midland County Horseshoe Arena & Pavilion, 2514 Arena Trail.

A keynote dinner will be March 1 at the Petroleum Club in Midland.

UTPB Vice President for Student Affairs and Leadership Becky Spurlock said this will be the first time the welcome reception has been held at the Engineering Building.

"We're excited about having it there," Spurlock said.

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Richard Brantley, this year's conference chair, said they are expecting between 300 and 400 people to attend.

"That's in the middle of the road. We've had more than that, but I think that's what I'm anticipating," said Brantley, who is senior vice president of operations at University Lands.

There is no designated theme, but the panels and speakers will talk about contemporary concerns about produced water management. Brantley noted that this is not a produced water conference, but one that covers broader water issues.

"The contemporary concerns we're dealing with are beneficial reuse of produced water, how can we grow that percentage; and then certainly, seismicity, which may result from injection is another concern. I think somebody said it well the other day that the ... Midland-Odessa community is wide awake about the seismic occurrences as you've experienced and we've all experienced," Brantley said.

They will also be enhancing collaboration.

"We're trying to grow the body of knowledge and increase our collective wisdom about the best ways to manage water across the arid Permian Basin," he said.

Spurlock noted that one of the prominent features of the conference is its "incredible lineup" of speakers such as industry experts and government leaders.

"We've been able to really put together a portfolio of speakers that take a wide and long look at these issues and this year is no different. We're very thrilled to have Mike Sommers, who is the president and CEO of the American Petroleum Institute, providing our keynote," Spurlock said.

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Produced water research consortium.



Representatives from Texas A&M Agrilife, the Department of Energy and Texas Railroad Commission are also expected.

"Something I think could be beneficial to the public knowledge is this conference is held by UPTB and the John Ben Shepperd Leadership Institute. All the net proceeds from this conference go back to the university to support the leadership and education efforts of Permian Basin students," Brantley said.

"When we talk to potential sponsors when you describe to them how it's really a direct effort to educate the future oil and gas professionals that are going to be the next generation here in the Permian Basin, people that live here want to be here, you can just see and kind of straighten up and brighten up about the whole concept. It's not just, Ok here's another conference," he added.

Spurlock noted that students are invited to take part.

"We have students participate in many different ways. We have for a while now sponsored a poster contest where students can showcase their research that's related to this industry. Those students also compete for cash prizes, so it's a way that students can receive additional funding by showcasing their work," she said. "That program has continued to grow year over year."

Students also are invited to participate in different portions of the conference.

"So for example, many students also are going to class (so) they may come in between. We are facilitating their participation at lunches so that they can meet industry experts and have conversations. They'll be at the different receptions and meals. We actually continue to find more and more ways to involve students in the whole experience. We get great feedback from both sides," Spurlock said.

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Some of the water is too salty for agriculture use.



"You can purify it with desalination and distillation, but it's a cost per barrel equation that kind of meets you dead on," Brantley said.



He noted that fracking volumes have grown over the years when shale kicked up here around 2009-2010.



"The frack volumes were 200,000 barrels a day. They continued to grow due to observations that the more water we put down, the better the wells are, so general volume these days is about 700,000 barrels per completed oil well. It's significant, but again, not to worry the public too much if you compare the oil and gas industry's water needs to agriculture, it's a pretty small slice of the pie chart," Brantley said.

"We're used to seeing agriculture being irrigated and we don't think anything about it, but it utilizes far, far more water as far as ... the frack volumes. That's kind of where that progress has occurred and it's plateaued at about 700,000. It's been that way for the last year and a half or two. I don't really foresee that growing much more but every day a new idea, so we'll see," he added.

Brantley said the Department of Energy has done a tremendous amount of work on this.

"They're going to give a presentation and then the produced water consortiums from New Mexico, both Dr. Hightower and then from Lubbock over at Texas Tech, Rusty Smith, they're all going to be there and of course Sen. Charles Perry of Lubbock is the strong champion for what can we do with all this water," he said.

Both Spurlock and Brantley are looking forward to the event. Last year was her first year working closely and participating in the conference.

"Obviously I'm outside the industry, but work at the university and I've learned so much. I've found it so

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excellent sponsors. We've had great support from the community. We've had a lot of interest and the interest in the conference continues to grow in terms of individuals interested, companies interested but also people interested from geographically inside and outside the Permian Basin," she added.

Brantley said many of the attendees will be from the Permian Basin, but people also will come from Houston, New Mexico and perhaps Oklahoma. There also have been international attendees.

"As the conversation goes internationally, everybody wants to be doing something in the Permian so it wouldn't surprise me to see contingents from foreign countries also. This whole idea was incubated by Jim Woodcock. I've worked with Jim for 30-plus years in various businesses. He's just a very diligent and effective person. ... This year, they asked me to chair this conference and I'm very pleased to follow his footsteps, for sure," Brantley said.

Spurlock said they will be honoring Woodcock at the keynote dinner in recognition of founding the conference and his contributions and long service to the oil and gas industry.

They are finalizing the agenda, but some of the additional featured speakers are: Lee Fuller, Independent Petroleum Association of America Officer — Environment and General Strategy; Katie Smye, Bureau of Economic Geology geoscientist; Markus Drouven, Department of Energy Produced Water Optimization Technical Director; Katie Lewis, Texas A&M AgriLife Research Associate Professor; Paul Dubois, Railroad Commission of Texas Assistant Director of Technical Permitting, Oil and Gas Division; and Kelly Bennett, B3 Insight Co-Founder & CEO.

Also, Mike Dyson, Infinity Water Solutions CEO; Sam Sledge, ProPetro Services CEO; Brady Murphy, TETRA Technologies President & CEO; Robert Crain, Texas Pacific Water





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