

SPORTS

Scurry County Judge declares disaster after 5.1 earthquake

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AD 00:00 **Coming up:** Antonio Brown and Tom Brady Fight at Practice

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Jul. 26-A 5.1-magnitude earthquake Friday morning struck near Snyder, the largest of more than 80 quakes that have happened in this area over the past seven days.

The earthquake was located about 10 miles northeast of Snyder on the Scurry-Fisher county line, just south of the East Farm-to-Market Road 1614, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. The quake was recorded at 9:28 a.m. and was about 2 miles deep.

TOP VIDEOS



Scurry County Judge Dan Hick made a disaster declaration Friday and has requested assistance from the State of Texas. He cited damage found in businesses and residences throughout the county.

Oil & Gas Operations in the Area

Moriah Operating and Browing Oil Co. have wells in the immediate area, according to the Railroad Commission's GIS map, and Kinder Morgan operates a carbon dioxide transmission pipeline along FM 1614.

Karl Vornsand, vice president of operations for Moriah Energy, told the Reporter-Telegram that the company is aware of the seismic activity in the area and is closely monitoring its facilities for signs of damage. While the company continues to monitor the situation, he said no signs of damage have been seen.

A spokeswoman for Kinder Morgan, which has extensive producing and carbon dioxide-enhanced oil recovery operations in Scurry County, declined to speculate on any causes of the seismicity but said the company's operations

have not been impacted.

Railroad Commission Response

Railroad Commissioner Jim Wright told the Reporter-Telegram in a telephone interview the agency is sending investigators to the area and will work to determine if water injection was a contributing factor.

"We're doing a lot of work in that space: the industry, the Railroad Commission, the Bureau of Economic Geology. We're making progress," Wright said.

Eyes on Injection Wells

Steve Melzer of Meltzer Consulting told the Reporter-Telegram by email that Friday morning's earthquake even swayed the Wilco Building for 15 seconds.

"I had been worried about this area east of Snyder for a while, and this one will trigger action by the Railroad Commission," he wrote. "I expect the Snyder folks are bombarding the RRC right now with calls."

Providing a map of new horizontal wells in the Scurry County-Fisher County area, Melzer pointed to six injection wells located close to the Fisher County line that he called troubling.

"It is a bit early for pointing fingers, and I don't have their volumes of injection, but I am sure they are big volume injectors. They look to be injecting deep, likely the Strawn formation at more than 7,000 feet," he wrote.

A Rattling Week

As of 3 p.m. Friday, the USGS earthquake map showed 22 earthquake events of all magnitudes had happened Friday, ranging from 1.5 to 5.1. Over the past 30

days, this area northeast of Snyder has seen 83 earthquakes - 81 of which have happened over the past seven days.

Earthquakes rated at 4.9 and 4.4 occurred late Monday night, and a 4.0 happened Wednesday evening.

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