

ATASCOSA COUNTY JUDGE

WEDNESDAY 09/13/2023

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The Eagle Ford Shale in South Texas has long been known to contain oil and gas. However, it wasn't until 2008 that the first well was drilled just south of Atascosa in La Salle County. This marked the dawn of a new era for the South Texas region that would significantly impact the energy landscape, our infrastructure and the economy. Stretching across over 20,000 square miles in South Texas, the Eagle Ford Shale forms an arc from Laredo near the Mexican border, extending over 400 miles northeast. The name Eagle Ford is derived from the town of Eagle Ford, Texas, where the shale's presence is evident on the surface as clay soil. Most counties covered by the Eagle Ford Shale are characterized by small, rural communities similar to Atascosa. The Eagle Ford Shale experienced its real turning point in 2010 when drilling permits began to surge. That year, more than a thousand permits were issued, laying the foundation for a booming industry. By 2012, this number had skyrocketed to almost 4,000 permits. This exponential growth paved the way for the Eagle Ford Shale to become a major player in the energy sector. It was a remarkable transformation that fueled prosperity throughout the region. Despite its success, the

boom ended abruptly in 2015. Plummeting oil prices and a shift in drilling activity towards the Permian region of western Texas played pivotal roles in this downturn. This served as a harsh reminder of the unpredictability of the energy industry. It wasn't until 2019 that the Eagle Ford began to recover. However, then the inevitable COVID pandemic hit us and the number of shale rigs took a nosedive by August of 2020. The recovery was once again hit in February 2021, after the ice storm we all painfully remember further reduced production.

Nonetheless, the Eagle Ford's resilience overcame its setbacks, and since then, production operations in the shale have steadily regained momentum. Fast forward to today and production is again thriving. Oil and natural gas extraction have again become the region's lifeblood, bringing new economic prosperity. The consistent increase in drilling permits has allowed energy companies to extract these valuable resources, bringing new employment opportunities to Atascosa County and numerous other rural communities in South Texas. The industry has not only generated thousands of jobs, but it has also injected millions of dollars into government reserves and laid the groundwork for sustained growth in the years to come. Recent developments indicate that the Eagle Ford Shale's potential remains steady. A round table discussion hosted by the McMullen County Judge, in collaboration with county judges from across the Eagle Ford region, highlighted the shale's enduring impact on infrastructure and the future of the oil and gas industry in South Texas. Key stakeholders, including EOG, Marathon Oil, Conoco, Workforce Solutions Alamo and others, presented data that underlines Eagle Ford's resilience, indicating that it is positioned to continue its significant contribution to the energy landscape for years. Highs and lows have marked the Eagle Ford Shale's journey, still, its ability to rebound and prosper is a testament to the resilience of the energy industry and the communities it sustains. The Eagle Ford Shale stands as a vital contributor, not just to the Texas economy but to the global energy landscape.

I want to remind those who may be interested in attending the inaugural State of the County Address on Oct. 5. I encourage all residents to join us for an engaging evening as we come together to celebrate the progress and promise of Atascosa County at the inaugural State of the County event. The event promises to provide valuable insight into our county's past, present, and future. Thursday, Oct. 5 at 5:30 p.m. at the Atascosa County Justice Center in Jourdan. Learn and become an active participant in shaping the future of Atascosa County. Connect with your fellow neighbors, local leaders, and those who are committed to making Atascosa County an even better place to live. Your presence at this event is not only encouraged but essential as we work together towards a brighter future for our beloved county. We can't wait to see you there. Together we are Atascosa Proud!

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