

**RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS
OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL
OIL AND GAS SECTION**

OIL AND GAS DOCKET NO. 04-0232122

ENFORCEMENT ACTION FOR ALLEGED VIOLATIONS COMMITTED BY UNION CRUDE COMPANY (876326), AS TO THE WELDER LEASE, WELL NO. 4401 (164236), ROOKE (6100) FIELD, AND WELDER LEASE, WELL NO. 1 (132097), WELDER WILDLIFE (7120) FIELD, SAN PATRICIO COUNTY, TEXAS

FINAL ORDER

The Commission finds that after statutory notice the captioned enforcement proceeding was heard by the examiner on March 13, 2003, and that the respondent, Union Crude Company (876326), failed to appear or respond to the notice. Pursuant to § 1.49 of the Commission's General Rules of Practice and Procedure [Tex. R. R. Comm'n, 16 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 1.49] and after being duly submitted to the Railroad Commission of Texas at conference held in its offices in Austin, Texas, the Commission makes the following findings of fact and conclusions of law.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Union Crude Company (876326), ("Respondent") was given Notice of Opportunity for Hearing by certified mail, addressed to the most recent P-5 address on the Form P-5 Organization Report, which was signed and returned to the Commission.
2. The returned certified receipt containing the Original Complaint and the Notice of Opportunity for Hearing was signed and returned to the Commission on January 24, 2003. The receipt has been on file with the Commission for 15 days, exclusive of the day of receipt and day of issuance.
3. On June 12, 1998, Respondent, a Corporation, filed an Organization Report (Form P-5) with the Commission reporting that its officers consisted of the following individual(s): Thomas E. Fereday; President.
4. Respondent designated itself to the Commission as the operator of Well No. 4401 (164236) on the Welder Lease and Well No. 1 (132097) on the Welder Lease ("subject wells"/"subject leases") by filing a Form P-4 (Producer's Transportation Authority and Certificate of Compliance) with the Commission effective on November 1, 1997 for both of the subject wells and subject leases.

5. According to Commission records the Respondent's Form P-5 (Organization Report) became delinquent on February 1, 1999. Respondent paid a fee of \$246.00 as financial assurance at the time of its last Form P-5 renewal.
6. The subject wells ceased production on or before May 31, 1999 for Well No. 4401 (164236) and January 1, 1993 for Well No. 1 (132097).
7. The subject wells have not been properly plugged in accordance with, and are not otherwise in compliance with, Statewide Rule 14.
8. Usable quality groundwater in the area is likely to be contaminated by migrations or discharges of saltwater and other oil and gas wastes from the subject wells. Unplugged wellbores constitute a cognizable threat to the public health and safety because of the probability of pollution.
9. The estimated cost to the State of plugging the subject wells is \$16,300.00 for Well No. 4401 (164236) and \$9,900.00 for Well No. 1 (132097).
10. Commission district office inspections were conducted on May 17, 2002 and June 6, 2002 for the Welder Lease. The signs or identification required to be posted at the lease displayed incorrect information, were missing at the tank battery and were illegible at the well site.
11. Commission district office inspections were conducted on May 17, 2002 and June 6, 2002 for the Welder Lease. The signs or identification required to be posted at the lease and the tank battery displayed incorrect information and were illegible at the well site.
12. The Respondent has not demonstrated good faith since it failed to plug or otherwise place the subject leases and the subject wells in compliance after being notified of the violations by the District Office and failed to appear at the hearing to explain its inaction.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. Proper notice was issued by the Railroad Commission to respondent and to all other appropriate persons legally entitled to notice.
2. All things necessary to the Commission attaining jurisdiction over the subject matter and the parties in this hearing have been performed or have occurred.
3. Respondent is in violation of Commission Statewide Rules 3(a) and 14(b)(2).
4. Respondent is responsible for maintaining the subject lease in compliance with Rule 3(a), which requires that each property that produces oil, gas or geothermal resources and each oil, gas, or geothermal resource well and tank, or other approved crude oil measuring facility shall post signs or identification.

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5. Respondent is responsible for maintaining the subject leases in compliance with all applicable Commission rules and for properly plugging the subject wells according to Statewide Rules 14, 58, and 79 and Chapters 89 and 91 of the Texas Natural Resources Code.
6. The documented violations committed by the respondent constitute acts deemed serious, a hazard to the public health, and demonstrate a lack of good faith pursuant to TEX. NAT. RES. CODE ANN. §81.0531(c) (Vernon 2001).

IT IS ORDERED THAT within 30 days from the day immediately following the date this order becomes final:

1. Union Crude Company (876326), shall plug the Welder Lease, Well No. 4401 (164236), Rooke (6100) Field, and Well No. 1 (132097), Welder Lease, Welder Wildlife (7120) Field, San Patricio County, Texas in compliance with applicable Commission rules and regulations; and
2. Union Crude Company (876326), shall pay to the Railroad Commission of Texas, for disposition as provided by law, an administrative penalty in the amount of **FIVE THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$5,500.00)**.

It is further **ORDERED** by the Commission that this order shall not be final and effective until 20 days after a party is notified of the Commission's order. A party is presumed to have been notified of the Commission's order three days after the date on which the notice is actually mailed. If a timely motion for rehearing is filed by any party at interest, this order shall not become final and effective until such motion is overruled, or if such motion is granted, this order shall be subject to further action by the Commission. Pursuant to TEX. GOV'T CODE § 2001.146(e), the time allotted for Commission action on a motion for rehearing in this case prior to its being overruled by operation of law, is hereby extended until 90 days from the date the order is served on the parties.

All requested findings of fact and conclusions of law which are not expressly adopted herein are denied. All pending motions and requests for relief not previously granted or granted herein are denied.

Noncompliance with the provisions of this order is subject to enforcement by the Attorney General and subject to civil penalties of up to \$10,000.00 per day per violation.

Done this 24th day of June 2003.

RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS

(Signatures affixed by Default Master Order dated June 24, 2003)

SP/sa