

2014 CONFERENCE BENEFITS ENVIRONMENT AND BUSINESS

TCEQ hosts environmental event for the 22nd year

More than 4,000 people attended the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's 2014 Environmental Trade Fair and Conference on May 6-7 in Austin. More than one in five attendees surveyed identified themselves as engineers.

Continuing Education a Big Draw

This year's conference featured more than a hundred classroom sessions, some of which afforded professionals with continuing education credit of interest to participants, including TCEQ Chairman Bryan W. Shaw, Ph.D., P.E. (pictured left), who attended three different continuing educational sessions as part of his license requirements as a professional engineer.

"Our profession is constantly changing to meet the challenges of today's industry," says Shaw. "Particularly, since Texas is experiencing such economic growth, it is vital that professional engineers stay current with best practices and new regulations. The conference gives us an accessible way to, not only meet requirements, but discuss topics of interest with others in the field."

Dr. Eugene Lindemann, a consulting engineer based out of Temple, has been coming to the conference for four years and earned 10 continuing education units needed to maintain his license. But he says you don't have to be an engineer to benefit: "The setup is great, the meeting is great, the programs are fantastic, and you have a wide variety to choose from. So, no

matter what profession you're in, there should be a slot here for you."



Above: TCEQ staffers answer questions from the public about how the agency works. **Below:** C.W. Clark, P.E. of TBPE and TCEQ's Minor Hibbs (seated) give a popular Ethics course presentation.





Attendees learn ways to Take Care of Texas.

Networking Opportunities are Good for Business

That proved true for Danielle Kurek, an environmental compliance professional from the Dallas area, who came to the conference for the first time. Kurek enjoyed meeting new contacts while learning about Texas. “I’m very new to Texas. I’ve been here for about four months so it’s given me a wonderful opportunity to meet everybody from TCEQ as well as connect with a lot of local vendors, and even consultants, to give me more knowledge about environmental issues here.”

Networking with other professionals was an important aspect of the conference for Cathy West Dougherty, P.E. Dougherty is CEO of an engineering firm in Rockwall that had a booth in the exhibit hall.

“We find new vendors to work with us every year. I can’t say we come out of here with a check for a million dollars but we always follow up and we’ve always gotten work,” she explained. “In these economies a lot of state and federal budgets are cut and we have to work smarter. We find a lot of the vendors, the drillers, and the labs here that we wouldn’t know existed unless we come.”

Dougherty’s firm was in good company. The exhibit hall featured 365 exhibitors catering to a wide array of environmental needs. While Dougherty and her team discussed their services with

passers-by, Kurek made connections with vendors and Lindemann checked out the latest high-tech gadgets. Contractors, equipment vendors, engineering firms, laboratories, and suppliers of all kinds shared exhibition space at the Austin Convention Center with representatives from a number of different divisions of the TCEQ.

To hear directly from Lindemann, Dougherty and Kurek, see the Attendee Perspectives video at [youtube.com/user/TCEQNews](https://www.youtube.com/user/TCEQNews).

Take Care of Texas Makes Conservation Personal

Prominent among the TCEQ exhibits was the Take Care of Texas booth where more than 500 attendees took a pledge to conserve water, energy and reduce waste. Staffers were on hand to offer visitors many of the free educational materials, such as kids’ activity materials and bookmarks, home and office tips, and water-conservation materials. Anyone can order these and many other publications online to share at work or neighborhood events.

Those in the audience of Tuesday’s luncheon with the commissioners got to see a short video about the program featuring Commissioner Zak Covar’s three children, Ashlynn, Tyler, and Tanner.

The audience also heard a sneak preview of this summer’s Take Care of Texas radio spot featuring Kevin Fowler singing his now famous refrain, “Take Care of Texas—it’s the only one we’ve got.”



Take the pledge, order free publications, and more at TakeCareOfTexas.org.

Oil and Gas Expansion

The main course of the luncheon discussion was served by Chairman Shaw and Commissioner Covar, who explained ways the TCEQ balances the needs of both the environment and the expanding oil and gas exploration industries in Texas. Half of all active oil and gas wells in the country are in Texas.

Both commissioners emphasized the importance of data collection in balancing environmental and economic concerns. Each referenced the Barnett Shale, one of the most monitored areas in the world, as an example of managing economic growth while minimizing environmental impacts.

“We learned a lot in 2009 and 2010 which helped us when the Eagle Ford took off,” said Covar. “We reallocated resources in the field to make sure we had boots on

the ground. We utilized new technologies using auto-GC monitoring so we could see the impacts to make sure those impacts aren't affecting ozone in those areas."

Shaw explained that data is collected continuously in the Barnett Shale and reported online in near-real time. "That's helped us to gain even more confidence in our regulatory approach because we know based on the years of operation we have, millions of data points that we've collected through auto GCs and/or canister sampling, that the regulatory process is working. We don't see environmental levels of concern in the Barnett Shale."

While air quality gets a lot of attention, Shaw says many of the problems stem from the rapid growth. "One of the greatest challenges we have in the Eagle Ford Shale area from an environmental standpoint are all the RV parks that spring up ... people realize that when they have 15 connections or more they suddenly become a 'public water system' and have to go through the testing and reporting requirement," Shaw said. The agency developed [fact sheets](#) and processes to assist operators with these growing pains.

There are differences between the two plays as well. The Barnett Shale is in or adjacent to a densely populated area where the Eagle Ford is spread out in areas with fewer people. "We're out there every day monitoring and we're not seeing that impact [on air quality]." said Covar. "We're going to continue to dedicate resources to make sure that air quality stays good." Covar reminded the audience that investment of more than a half million dollars for monitoring is planned in the next biennium.

Excellence Honored

Every year a highlight of the trade fair and conference is the banquet held on the second night of the event honoring the winners of the Texas Environmental Excellence Awards. This year was no exception.

2014 TEXAS ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS



The winners of the 22nd annual [Texas Environmental Excellence Awards](#) were honored at a banquet on May 7 hosted by the TCEQ.

Among this year's honorees are:

- two Eagle Scouts who worked to save natural resources for future generations
- a company that makes water heaters from stainless steel
- an aerospace company that reduced energy use by 3,600 megawatt hours per year
- an oil and gas company that reduced air emissions from cleaning pipeline by 90 percent
- a company that developed a water-based finishing process for fiberglass doors
- an airplane repair facility that saves millions of gallons of water through a reuse system

In addition, a hands-on marine science education program for fifth and sixth graders and the state's Master Naturalist program are highlighted.

These prestigious awards bring attention to the most innovative and effective projects that prevent pollution and preserve natural resources in Texas.

2014 Award Winners

Pollution Prevention

[Pioneer Natural Resources](#) | [Amarillo](#)
[PVI Industries, LLC](#) | [Fort Worth](#)

Youth

[Connor Crowe](#) | [Austin](#)
[Archer Samuel Hadley](#) | [Austin](#)

Education

[Flour Bluff Intermediate School](#) | [Corpus Christi](#)

Innovative Operations/Management

[GlassCraft Door Company](#) | [Houston](#)

Technical/Technology

[Raytheon Company](#) | [McKinney](#)

Water Conservation

[StandardAero San Antonio, Inc.](#) | [San Antonio](#)

Civic/Community

[Texas Master Naturalist Program](#) | [Statewide](#)

Pictured: Archer Hadley (seated) is congratulated by Chairman Shaw (far left); Don Smith of Waste Management, Inc.; and his brother Richard as fellow winner Connor Crowe (standing) looks on.



View videos of the award winners and banquet at youtube.com/user/TCEQNews.

The winners were recognized in a special announcement.

TCEQ Commissioner Toby Baker introduced the video presentation: “Tonight we want the focus to be on our Texas Environmental Excellence winners and no one is prouder of our winners than our own governor who tonight has this special message for our honorees—ladies and gentlemen, the honorable Governor Rick Perry.”

Baker then introduced the Governor’s Blue Ribbon Committee members who selected the nine winners and 20 finalists from 210 applications. Baker knows the difficult task firsthand. “Having previously served on this [committee], I know what a hard job this can be. It takes a huge time commitment and it is especially tough when, like this year, there are so many strong applicants to choose from.”

Something for Everyone

Every person can do something to enhance or preserve the environment.



TCEQ commissioners at the annual awards banquet. (Left to right) Commissioner Toby Baker; Chairman Bryan W. Shaw, Ph.D., P.E.; Commissioner Zak Covar.

The TCEQ’s Environmental Trade Fair and Conference helps further those efforts through education, exposure to the latest technology, creating opportunities to network with like-minded people, answering regulatory questions, and sharing inspiring stories of the best examples in the state. We all have a responsibility to take care of

Texas. The conference gives us ways to do it well. 🌟

 **Catch videos and a radio spot at [youtube.com/user/TCEQNews](https://www.youtube.com/user/TCEQNews):**

- Attendee perspectives
- Luncheon with the commissioners
- Take Care of Texas radio spot
- Special message from Gov. Rick Perry



Natural Outlook is published monthly by the TCEQ’s Agency Communications Division. Articles are not copyrighted and may be reproduced. (Photos and graphics that are credited to other sources may not be used without their permission.) Please credit the TCEQ for material used and send a copy to the editor: Natural Outlook, MC 118, TCEQ, P.O. Box 13087, Austin, TX 78711-3087. Or e-mail <ac@tceq.texas.gov>, or fax 512-239-5010.

To sign up to receive e-mail alerts of new issues, visit www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/outlook.

How is our customer service? www.tceq.texas.gov/customersurvey

The TCEQ is an equal opportunity employer. The agency does not allow discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, or veteran status.