



First meeting set for new Oil and Gas Conservation Commission

Oct. 2, 2013

(BOISE) - Idaho's recently reconstructed Oil and Gas Conservation Commission will meet for the first time on Friday, Oct. 4, in Boise.

The meeting is scheduled for 10 a.m. in the Senate hearing room WW55 in the lower level west wing of the Idaho Capitol.

Commissioners will elect a chairman and vice chairman, establish frequency of regular meetings, and select dates of regular meetings for 2014. The full agenda can be viewed [here](#).

Earlier this year Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter and the Idaho Legislature approved a bill that replaced the existing commissioners - the same five constitutional officers who serve on the State Board of Land Commissioners - with five members appointed by the Governor and approved by the Idaho Senate. The commission members are experts in oil and gas, geology and water, and two landowner representatives - one who owns mineral rights and one who owns land without mineral rights.

Although Idaho's regulations will continue to evolve over time, **the revamped commission is the final step in a series of changes over more than two years that bring Idaho's regulatory structure for a promising natural gas industry up to twenty-first century standards.** A frequently-asked-questions document on changes to Idaho's oil and gas rules and statutes is available [here](#).

"Idaho had the advantage of seeing what laws worked and didn't work in other states to encourage development of natural gas and oil resources, while maintaining the health and safety of the environment and the public," Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) Director and Commission Secretary Tom Schultz said. "Idaho has put in place a regulatory structure that compiles the best of what we have seen in other states, including a commission made up of subject matter experts."

The appointed commission members are:

James Classen of Boise, representing geological interests, to a four-year term

Ken Smith of Boise, representing oil and gas interests, to a four-year term

Margaret Chipman of Weiser, representing landowners with mineral rights, to a three-year term

Chris Beck of Hayden Lake, representing water interests, to a two-year term

Sid Cellan of Soda Springs, representing landowners without mineral rights, to a one-year term

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AM Idaho drilled two new wells this year, including the Smoke Ranch well pictured above, and is working toward construction of pipeline infrastructure that will make possible commercial production of natural gas and oil in Idaho.

The Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) permitted and **AM Idaho drilled two new wells in Payette County this year** after the company conducted extensive exploration activities in 2012.

Add that to nine existing drilled wells the company took over from Bridge Energy, and **11 wells are ready for development or already in development.**

Trendwell Energy is another company that conducted seismic exploration in 2012 but hasn't submitted any applications to drill.

The **next step** for AM Idaho is production of the resources, which requires **pipeline infrastructure.**

Earlier this year, **industry indicated it is moving closer toward construction of a pipeline, making first-ever production of natural gas and oil in Idaho possible.**

"The exploration, drilling, and development activities that have taken place in Payette County over the past couple of years haven't received a lot of attention, and that's a good thing from a regulatory standpoint," IDL Director and Commission Secretary Tom Schultz said. **"The operations have been in compliance with the law and Idaho Department of Lands as the regulating agency hasn't encountered any issues of concern with the operators."**

IDL has not received any applications to hydraulically fracture, or "frack." Reservoir characteristics of the area do not currently warrant fracking as an extraction method.

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