

Bullock Museum unveils renovated gallery highlighting history of oil and natural gas in Texas

Texas Oil and Gas explores the impact of oil and natural gas discoveries on the story of Texas

OCTOBER 28, 2019 (AUSTIN, TX) — A newly redesigned and expanded gallery highlighting the past, present and future of the oil and natural gas industry in Texas is now open at the Bullock Texas State History Museum. *Texas Oil and Gas* explores how the industry impacts the country, the world, and our everyday lives.

Since the first major Texas oil strike at Spindletop in 1901, Texans have been harnessing oil to fuel nearly every element of daily life. Today, nearly 40 percent of the nation's oil comes from Texas, with more than 285,000 active oil and gas wells producing an average of 4.1 million barrels of oil and 24 billion cubic feet of gas each day.

"Understanding how the oil and natural gas industries have affected Texas through the decades is integral to telling the story of Texas and our nation," said Bullock Museum Director Margaret Koch. "We've expanded the conversation beyond the amazing early 20th century gushers and into the 21st century with an exploration of how petroleum products and innovative science are interwoven throughout our daily lives."

Texas Oil and Gas begins by exploring the history of Texas oil and the enormous economic impact it had on the state in the early days of the industry, from boomtowns to the crash in the 1930s and, ultimately, the stabilizing regulatory control that followed. Visitors will see early photographs, oil field maps, and original artifacts, including full-size gas pumps and a fur-trimmed beaded opera cape worn by oil entrepreneur Mae Belcher in 1912.

Central to the exhibition is a large working pump jack, an iconic symbol of Texas oil production, with an accompanying animation and informational graphic demonstrating the process of extracting crude oil from a well. Visitors will also discover a colorful floor-to-ceiling tactile wall displaying items containing petroleum, from dishes, dolls and clothing, to a full-size kayak. Large-scale graphics explore how we get crude oil and natural gas, process it, and use it to make these common manufactured products.

The bilingual (English and Spanish) installation addresses environmental impact and technological development, examining the advances since the early days of the industry



The *Texas Oil and Gas* gallery features interactives, multimedia, and artifacts to tell the story of oil and natural gas in Texas.

and modern technology that is used to ensure safety and compliance. Visitors will view an eight-foot-tall "Christmas tree" from the 1890s, a shot detector from the 1940s, and a portable mud tester from the 1960s.

Visitors can also see oil and rock samples showing the diversity of what is below ground across the state and touch and crank a variety of drill bits that demonstrate the evolution of technology designed to increase efficiency and work in challenging environments. Video interviews highlight the diversity of careers within the oil industry, and immersive flyover footage captured in the Gulf of Mexico allows visitors to experience working on an off-shore oil rig.

"We wanted to provide an opportunity for visitors to understand the industry's roots and how Texas became a world leader in the field and ask people to think about the future," said Koch. "The tactile experiences, media, artifacts, and infographics explain the basics of how things work, and hopefully it will inspire folks to explore more about the topic on their own, too."

For more information about the Bullock Museum or the *Texas Oil and Gas* gallery, visit TheStoryofTexas.com.

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The Bullock Texas State History Museum is a division of the Texas State Preservation Board. Additional support for educational programming provided by the Texas State History Museum Foundation.

ABOUT THE BULLOCK MUSEUM

The Bullock Texas State History Museum includes three floors of exhibitions, IMAX® and special-effects theaters, a café and museum store. The Museum collaborates with more than 700 museums, libraries, archives and individuals to display original historical artifacts and host exhibitions that illuminate and celebrate Texas history and culture. For more, visit TheStoryofTexas.com or call (512) 936-8746.

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