# STATE OF NEW MEXICO

## ENERGY, MINERALS AND NATURAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

#### OIL CONSERVATION DIVISION

IN THE MATTER OF THE HEARING CALLED BY THE OIL CONSERVATION DIVISION FOR THE PURPOSE OF CONSIDERING:	CC Coomercial Control
APPLICATION OF OIL CONSERVATION DIVISION FOR AN ORDER REQUIRING ROCKY MOUNTAIN RESOURCES, INC., TO PROPERLY PLUG A WELL, LINCOLN COUNTY, NEW MEXICO	CASE NOS (11,942)
APPLICATION OF OIL CONSERVATION DIVISION FOR AN ORDER REQUIRING FRANK O. COX TO PROPERLY PLUG A WELL, DE BACA COUNTY, NEW MEXICO	, ) 11,943 ) )
APPLICATION OF OIL CONSERVATION DIVISION FOR AN ORDER REQUIRING RPM ENERGY, INC., TO PROPERLY PLUG SIX WELLS, EDDY COUNTY, NEW MEXICO	) 11,944 ) )
APPLICATION OF OIL CONSERVATION DIVISION FOR AN ORDER REQUIRING DELTA U.S. CORPORATION TO PROPERLY PLUG A WELL, EDDY COUNTY, NEW MEXICO	) ) and 11,945 ) )
	, ) (Consolidated)

# REPORTER'S TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS EXAMINER HEARING ORIGINAL

BEFORE: DAVID R. CATANACH, Hearing Examiner

March 5th, 1998 Santa Fe, New Mexico

This matter came on for hearing before the New Mexico Oil Conservation Division, DAVID R. CATANACH, Hearing Examiner, on Thursday, March 5th, 1998, at the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, Porter Hall, 2040 South Pacheco, Santa Fe, New Mexico, Steven T. Brenner, Certified Court Reporter No. 7 for the State of New Mexico.

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<pre>MIKE STUBBLEFIELD (Present by telephone) (Field Rep II, Artesia District Office, District 2, NMOCD)</pre>		
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# EXHIBITS

Applicant	's	Identified	Admitted
Case	11,942:		
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## APPEARANCES

## FOR THE DIVISION:

RAND L. CARROLL Attorney at Law Legal Counsel to the Division 2040 South Pacheco Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505

\* \* \*

WHEREUPON, the following proceedings were had at 1 2 10:20 a.m.: EXAMINER CATANACH: Okay, at this time let me 3 call Case 11,942, which is the Application of the Oil 4 Conservation Division for an order requiring Rocky Mountain 5 Resources, Inc., to properly plug a well in Lincoln County, 6 7 New Mexico. 8 At this time I'll call for appearances in this 9 case. 10 MR. CARROLL: May it please the Examiner, my name 11 is Rand Carroll, appearing on behalf of the Oil Conservation Division. I have one witness to be sworn. 12 13 Mr. Examiner, at this time for purposes of 14 testimony I would ask that Cases 11,942, 11,943, 11,944 and 15 11,945 be consolidated. EXAMINER CATANACH: At this time I'll call Case 16 11,943, the Application of the Oil Conservation Division 17 for an order requiring Frank O. Cox to properly plug a 18 19 well, De Baca County, New Mexico. 20 At this time I'll call Case 11,944, Application of the Oil Conservation Division for an order requiring RPM 21 22 Energy, Inc., to properly plug six wells, Eddy County, New 23 Mexico. 24 And finally at this time I'll call Case 11,945, 25 the Application of the Oil Conservation Division for an

order requiring Delta U.S. Corporation to properly plug a 1 well, Eddy County, New Mexico. 2 Call for additional appearances in any one of 3 these four cases. 4 5 There being none, let me swear the witness in. Mr. Stubblefield, would you stand, please, and 6 7 raise your right hand? 8 (Thereupon, the witness was sworn.) 9 EXAMINER CATANACH: Mr. Carroll, you may proceed. 10 MIKE STUBBLEFIELD (Present by telephone), 11 the witness herein, after having been first duly sworn upon 12 his oath, was examined and testified as follows: 13 DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MR. CARROLL: 14 15 Mr. Stubblefield, would you please state your 0. 16 name and city of residence for the record? 17 Α. Yes, I'm Mike Stubblefield. I'm currently 18 employed as a Field Rep II with the Oil Conservation in the Artesia Field office. 19 20 Mr. Stubblefield, do your duties as a field rep Q. 21 with the Artesia District Office include the supervision of 22 the plugging of abandoned oil and gas wells? 23 Α. Yes, sir. 24 0. And for how many years -- Mr. Stubblefield, have 25 you testified before the Division before in any Oil

6 1 Conservation Division case? No, sir. Α. 2 Would you please give the Examiner a brief 3 0. history of your education and experience? 4 I have a high school diploma. I have been 5 Α. employed in oil fields since I was 18 in various activities 6 7 such as drilling, pipelining. I was working with a service 8 company when I took this job with the Oil Conservation 9 Division in 1977. 10 And you've been employed with the Division since 0. 11 1977? Yes, sir. 12 Α. 13 And have you overseen the plugging of a number of Q. 14 oil and gas wells? 15 Α. Yes, I have. 16 Mr. Stubblefield, are you familiar with the wells Q. 17 that are the subject matters of the cases here today? 18 Yes, sir, I am. Α. 19 MR. CARROLL: Mr. Examiner, are Mr. Stubblefield's qualifications acceptable? 20 21 EXAMINER CATANACH: Mr. Stubblefield is so 22 qualified. 23 0. (By Mr. Carroll) Mr. Stubblefield, turning to

Case 11,942, do you have the well file for that well in

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front of you?

- 7 Yes, sir. A. 1 And that's the Rocky Mountain Resources, Inc., 2 Q. well? 3 4 Α. Yes, sir. 5 Q. On Exhibit Number 1 in that case, has the Artesia 6 District Office prepared a plugging procedure for that 7 well? Α. We have. 8 9 0. And is that contained in the exhibit? 10 Yes, sir. Α. 11 MR. CARROLL: Mr. Examiner, those are pages 1 and 12 2 of Exhibit Number 1. 13 (By Mr. Carroll) Mr. Stubblefield, will you Q. 14 please give the Examiner a brief history of this well, when it was drilled, what production was obtained from the well 15 16 and when was the last reported production and the current condition? 17 18 Α. Well, sir, we show this well was spudded 12-17 of 19 1981 at six o'clock p.m. by Terra of New Mexico, 20 Incorporated. The well was TD'd at 3090 foot on August 21 24th, 1982. A C-104 was filed on August 23rd, 1982, stating a new operator, Rocky Mountain Resources, 22
  - After showing continuous nonproduction for a year, we sent a letter to the operator June 25th, 1996,

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Incorporated.

asking for proper abandonment or TA of the well, and that letter was returned undelivered.

We sent another certified TA letter October 29th, 1996, with the same request, requesting proper abandonment of this said well, and that letter was also returned undelivered.

- Q. So the Artesia District Office has tried to locate the operator, and do you have any idea what happened to the operator?
- A. No, sir, I do not. We feel like we've made a diligent effort to locate the operator.
- Q. What's the current condition of this well? Why should it be plugged?
- A. It has been nonproductive for over a year, and we recommend the said well be plugged to protect fresh waters of the State of New Mexico, the environment and correlative rights and the area.
- Q. Mr. Stubblefield, I don't know if you're aware if there's a bond plugging this well or not, or covering it?
  - A. I believe there is, sir.

MR. CARROLL: Mr. Examiner, if you would refer to what has been marked OCD Exhibit Number 2, that is a copy of the bond file, including a recent letter received from United States Fidelity and Guaranty Insurance Company, asking for documentation of the bond for this well.

Following that letter is a copy of the bond file showing there is a \$7500 well. The insurance company has a number of times asked to have this bond canceled. The prior bond administrator, Diane Richardson, continually wrote back to the insurance company stating that there was still this well in existence and they weren't going to release it.

So it is the Division's position that this bond is still in effect, and the Division will respond to the insurance company, sending them an order from this hearing and a copy of Exhibit Number 2.

Mr. Examiner, if you'll refer to what has been marked Exhibit Number 3, that is an affidavit regarding notice, showing that notice was sent to the last known address of Rocky Mountain Resources, Inc., at a Denver area office in Englewood, Colorado, and to the insurance company.

The letter, certified letter, sent to the operator was returned as undeliverable, unable to forward, and the insurance company signed for the letter and received it, as shown by their return letter sent to us.

- Q. (By Mr. Carroll) Mr. Stubblefield, do you have anything further to add in Case 11,942?
  - A. No, sir, I do not.

MR. CARROLL: Mr. Examiner, that's all I have in

this case. 1 **EXAMINATION** 2 3 BY EXAMINER CATANACH: Mr. Stubblefield, did this well produce at all 4 5 during its history, do you know? Α. I do not believe so, sir. 6 7 Q. Okay. 8 Α. I have no records stating production. 9 they ran a long string, but I'm not showing a C-104 allowable ever issued. 10 11 EXAMINER CATANACH: Okay. I don't have anything 12 further in this case for the witness. 13 Exhibits Number 1, 2 and 3 will be admitted in 14 this Case 11,942 at this time. 15 MR. CARROLL: Thank you, Mr. Examiner. 16 Should I proceed with the Case 11,943? 17 EXAMINER CATANACH: Yes, you may proceed. 18 DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MR. CARROLL: 19 20 Q. Mr. Stubblefield, would you please turn your attention to the Frank O. Cox well, which is the subject of 21 22 Case 11,943? 23 Yes, sir. Α. 24 0. Do you have that well file in front of you? 25 Α. I do.

MR. CARROLL: And Mr. Examiner, if you'll refer to what has been marked Exhibit Number 1 in 11,943, again, the first two to three pages of that exhibit is the plugging procedure prepared by the Artesia District Office.

- Q. (By Mr. Carroll) Mr. Stubblefield, did the

  Artesia District Office prepare these plugging procedures
  that are contained --
  - A. Yes. Yes, sir, we did.

- Q. Mr. Stubblefield, will you give the Examiner a brief history of the Frank O. Cox well?
- A. Let's see. We received a C-103 December 6th of 1988, showing the operator ran and cemented 8 5/8 casing at 345 foot. We received a C-103 subsequent report November 8, 1988, showing the operator cemented 4-1/2-inch at 3000 foot.

We showed a completion report January 3rd of 1989 where the well was completed in the San Andres formation.

And also on this completion report we showed the well to be temporarily abandoned for further evaluation.

A C-104 was filed August 5th of 1991, stating a new operator, and I believe the original operator of this well was Esperanza Energy Corporation.

- Q. And the new operator was Frank O. Cox?
- A. Yes, sir, according to the C-104 filed August 5th of 1991.

1 So Mr. Stubblefield, this well was never 0. 2 produced? No, sir. 3 Α. Okay, Mr. Stubblefield, what's the current 4 condition of this well? It's just sitting there? 5 A. Yes, sir. We show the well to be temporarily 6 7 shut in with no production. 8 Q. Well, it's out of temporarily abandoned status 9 now, isn't it? 10 Α. No, sir. 11 Mr. Stubblefield, if it was temporarily abandoned Q. 12 back in 1991 -- Or here, I have a date here of 12-28-88. 13 Don't they have to -- What are the conditions of temporary abandonment? 14 We require a cast-iron bridge plug or a packer be 15 ran into the wellbore and the wellbore be circulated with 16 17 inert fluid and pressure tested for a period of 30 minutes at 500 pounds. 18 19 Aren't there -- For how long can you TA a well? 0. 20 We consider temporary abandonment to be good for A. 21 one year. Excuse me, sir, we will go five years on a 22 temporary abandonment. 23 0. Hasn't that five-year period expired without any 24 subsequent action by the operator?

I never have shown this well to be properly

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Α.

temporarily abandoned, sir.

- O. So it's not even in TA status?
- A. No, sir, it's just -- According to our records it's shut in with no temporary abandonment ever approved.
- Q. Mr. Stubblefield, in your opinion is the plugging of this well necessary to prevent waste, protect correlative rights and protect public health and the environment?
  - A. Yes, sir, I believe it is.

MR. CARROLL: Mr. Examiner, if you'll refer to what has been marked OCD Exhibit Number 2, this is a copy of the bond file showing that a \$7500 single well cash bond is in place with the United New Mexico Bank in Artesia.

If you'll refer to Exhibit Number 3, it is the affidavit of notice and copies of the certified letters that were sent to Mr. Frank O. Cox at his last known address in Abilene, Texas, and to United New Mexico Bank in Artesia.

The letter was signed for by the bank. The letter to Mr. Cox was returned to sender, forwarding order expired.

- Q. (By Mr. Carroll) Mr. Stubblefield, do you have anything further to add to this case?
- A. No, sir, I do not.
- MR. CARROLL: Mr. Examiner, I would ask that what

has been marked OCD Exhibits 1, 2 and 3 be entered into 1 2 evidence. EXAMINER CATANACH: Exhibits Number 1, 2 and 3 3 will be admitted as evidence in this case. 4 5 MR. CARROLL: And that's all I have in this case. 6 **EXAMINATION** 7 BY EXAMINER CATANACH: 8 Q. Okay, Mr. Stubblefield, I noticed on a picture 9 you had sent up there, there appears to be a pumping unit on this well? 10 Uh-huh. Yes, sir, I just noticed this picture. A. 11 That leads me to believe that maybe at one time 12 ο. or another this well did produce? 13 14 Α. Yeah, it would look that way. 15 Q. Okay. 16 A. Of course, that could have been a test, you know, pump, you know, never really made any production. 17 18 Q. Uh-huh. I'm not really sure on that one. 19 Α. 20 EXAMINER CATANACH: And Mr. Carroll, this cash bond is available for the Division to obtain? 21 22 MR. CARROLL: Hopefully. It should be. 23 EXAMINER CATANACH: Okay, I have nothing further in this case. 24 MR. CARROLL: 25 I have one follow-up question of

1 Mr. Stubblefield. 2 EXAMINER CATANACH: Okay. FURTHER EXAMINATION 3 BY MR. CARROLL: 4 5 Q. Mr. Stubblefield, in your estimate, what's the value of that pumping unit? Is it salvageable? 6 7 worth something? 8 Α. It seems to be in good condition from this picture, and I would say \$3500. 9 MR. CARROLL: Okay, thank you. 10 Shall I proceed with the next case, Mr. Examiner? 11 EXAMINER CATANACH: Please. Please do. 12 DIRECT EXAMINATION 13 BY MR. CARROLL: 14 15 Mr. Stubblefield, if you'll please turn your Q. attention to Case 11,944, the six wells operated by RPM 16 17 Energy, Inc. 18 Α. Okay. MR. CARROLL: Again, Mr. Examiner, if you will 19 20 refer to what has been Exhibits 1A through 1F, you will see 21 that the plugging procedures are the first two or three 22 pages on each subexhibit, and Mr. Stubblefield will give 23 you a brief history of these six wells. 24 Q. (By Mr. Carroll) Please go ahead, Mr. 25 Stubblefield.

- A. Okay. Which one would you like me to start with?
- Q. Can you kind of do them all at once? Were they all drilled at about the same time?
  - A. Okay.

- Q. Or you can do them one at a time, just --
- A. Well, I show these wells to all have been drilled around November of 1981; 2 3/4 casing was ran and cemented around 400 foot. Seven-inch casing was ran and cemented around 1140.

The wells were TD'd at 1370, which would mae them an open hole completion -- Well, excuse me, no, 4-1/2-inch casing was ran and cemented at 1370. C-104s were approved on these wells. I'm showing February 22nd of 1982 on the Exxon A State 2. And we did issue C-104 allowables on these wells.

- Q. When is the last reported production from these wells?
- A. I have -- I don't have that information on hand, sir. After a continuous period exceeding one year, we did send them letters requesting that they properly abandon these said wells.
- Q. Did the Artesia District Office get any response to those letters that were sent?
- A. No, sir. We sent a certified letter February

  26th of 1997, which was delivered, but we had no response.

We sent a second letter January 9th, 1998, which was undelivered. It was also a certified letter.

- Q. The one sent in 1998 was not signed for?
- A. That's what I'm showing, sir.
- Q. But the one in 1997 was signed for at the Big Spring, Texas, address?
  - A. Yes, sir.

- Q. Mr. Stubblefield, is the current condition of these wells such that the Division recommends that they be plugged in order to prevent waste and protect public health and the environment?
- A. Yes, sir, we recommend that these wells be plugged to protect fresh water in the area, the environment and correlative rights in the area.

MR. CARROLL: Mr. Examiner, If you will refer to what has been marked OCD Exhibit Number 2, this is again a copy of the OCD bond file.

Again, we did receive a letter from the insurance company asking for documentation of the \$50,000 bond placed by RPM to cover these wells. The Division will follow up with the insurance company agent, sending them a copy of Exhibit Number 2 and the order that is entered in this case.

If you'll refer to what has been marked OCD Exhibit Number 3, this is the affidavit regarding notice,

1	showing notice was sent to RPM Energy, Inc., at the last	
2	known address they signed for mail at, and to United States	
3	Fire Insurance Company, which is the issuer of the \$50,000	
4	blanket bond.	
5	Q. (By Mr. Carroll) Mr. Stubblefield, do you have	
6	anything further to add in this case?	
7	A. No, sir, I do not.	
8	MR. CARROLL: Mr. Examiner, at this time I would	
9	move that Exhibits Numbers 1, 2 and 3 be entered into the	
10	record.	
11	EXAMINER CATANACH: Exhibits 1 through 3 will be	
12	admitted as evidence in this case.	
13	Mr. Carroll, as far as you know, this bond is	
14	still in place?	
15	MR. CARROLL: That is correct.	
16	EXAMINER CATANACH: Okay.	
17	EXAMINATION	
18	BY EXAMINER CATANACH:	
19	Q. Mr. Stubblefield, these six wells are all	
20	generally in about the same condition, aren't they? They	
21	were drilled and cased in about the same manner; is that	
22	your understanding?	
23	A. Yes, sir, they were all completed in the same	
24	production formation.	
25	Q. So there are San Andres wells that were TD'd at	

about 1500 to 1700 feet, in that range there? 1 Well, I'm showing the completion -- We had 2 Α. 4-1/2-inch set at 1370, and I'm showing perforations to be 3 at 1239 foot to 1319 foot. 4 Okay, but the TD of the well is generally in the 5 0. 1500-1700-foot range? 6 7 No, three thousand -- Yes, sir, that would be fine. 1370 is what I'm showing completion on the Exxon A 8 9 State 2. But I believe they were all completed within that 10 general vicinity. 11 ο. Okay. And since we've got casing in these wells, you really don't anticipate having any -- too much problems 12 13 plugging these things? No, sir, I do not. 14 Α. EXAMINER CATANACH: Okay. I have nothing 15 16 further, no further questions in this case. 17 And Exhibits 1 through 3 will be admitted as evidence. 18 19 You may proceed. DIRECT EXAMINATION 20 BY MR. CARROLL: 21 Mr. Stubblefield, if you'll please turn your 22 23 attention to the well in Case 11,945, the Delta U.S. 24 Corporation well. 25 Mr. Examiner, again the recommended plugging

procedure is contained on the first three pages of Exhibit 1 2 Number 1. Mr. Stubblefield, did the Artesia District Office 3 prepare those plugging procedures? 4 Yes, sir, we did. 5 Α. Would you please give the Examiner a brief 6 ٥. 7 history of the Delta U.S. well? 8 Α. Yes, sir, I show this well to be spudded by 9 Morris R. Antwell 8-31 of 1967 at 6:15 a.m. 13 3/8 casing 10 was ran and cemented at 273 foot. 9-8 of 1967, we're 11 showing an 8 5/8 casing ran and cemented at 2592. was subsequently TD'd at 10,731. 12 13 It was plugged on 10-13 of 1967. The well -- We're showing a re-entry on this well 14 15 of March 30th of 1970, and this re-entry was made by Morris 16 Antwell. 17 We're showing a subsequent report, 4-1/2-inch casing was ran and cemented at 11,665, and a C-104 18 allowable was approved on this well August 27th of 1970. 19 We're showing another 104 February 8th of 1978, 20 showing a change of operator from Morris Antwell to Reserve 21 Oil, Incorporated. 22 23 We're showing another C-104 January 16th, 1978, 24 showing a change of operator from Reservoir Oil,

Incorporated, to Delta Drilling Company, who is the current

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operator.

Field inspection was made 7-14 of 1989 by myself, and I was showing the well shut in with no gas connect.

- Q. Mr. Stubblefield, have attempts been made by the Artesia District Office to inform Delta U.S. Corporation of the condition of the well and the need to do something with it?
- A. Yes, sir, we sent a certified letter October 28th of 1996, requesting this well be properly abandoned to our standards.

The letter was returned with no forward address.

- Q. So Mr. Stubblefield, is the plugging of this well recommended by the Artesia District Office, in order to prevent waste, protect correlative rights and protect fresh waters and the environment?
  - A. Yes, sir.

MR. CARROLL: Mr. Examiner, you will note in this case that Exhibit Number 2 is the affidavit regarding notice. Notice was sent to Delta U.S. Corporation at the last known address. The letter was returned as undeliverable, forwarding address expired.

A search of the Division bond files could find no bond for this well. We will continue to search, but it appears for whatever reason no bond covers this well.

Q. (By Mr. Carroll) Mr. Stubblefield, do you have

1	anything further to add in this case?
2	A. No, sir, I do not.
3	MR. CARROLL: Mr. Examiner, at this time I would
4	move what has been marked Exhibits Number 1 and 2 into the
5	record.
6	EXAMINER CATANACH: Exhibits Number 1 and 2 will
7	be admitted as evidence in this case.
8	And I have no questions of the witness at this
9	time.
10	Do you have anything further in this case, Mr.
11	Carroll?
12	MR. CARROLL: No, I don't.
13	EXAMINER CATANACH: Okay. Do you have anything
14	further in any of these four cases?
15	MR. CARROLL: No, I don't.
16	EXAMINER CATANACH: There being nothing further
17	in these cases, Case 11,942, 11,943, 11,944 and 11,945 will
18	be taken under advisement at this time.
19	And this hearing is adjourned.
20	(Thereupon, these proceedings were concluded at
21	10:47 a.m.)
22	* * *    the hereby certify that the foregoing is    the hereby certify that the proceedings in
23	the Examiner hearing of Case No./1942-46
24	heard by me on
25	Oil Conservation Division

#### CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

STATE OF NEW MEXICO )
) ss.
COUNTY OF SANTA FE )

I, Steven T. Brenner, Certified Court Reporter and Notary Public, HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing transcript of proceedings before the Oil Conservation Division was reported by me; that I transcribed my notes; and that the foregoing is a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am not a relative or employee of any of the parties or attorneys involved in this matter and that I have no personal interest in the final disposition of this matter.

WITNESS MY HAND AND SEAL March 7th, 1998.

STEVEN T. BRENNER

CCR No. 7

My commission expires: October 14, 1998