

1R - 425-0

# GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

YEAR(S):

2010

# **RICE Operating Company**

122 West Taylor • Hobbs, New Mexico 88240

Phone: (575) 393-9174 • Fax: (575) 397-1471

RECEIVED

APR - 6 2010

Environmental Bureau  
Oil Conservation Division

## **CERTIFIED MAIL**

**RETURN RECEIPT NO. 7008 1140 0001 3072 4567**

April 1, 2010

Mr. Edward Hansen  
New Mexico Energy, Minerals, & Natural Resources  
Oil Conservation Division, Environmental Bureau  
1220 S. St. Francis Drive  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505

RE: JUNCTION BOX UPGRADE REPORT for 2009  
VACUUM SWD SYSTEM  
Lea County, New Mexico

Mr. Hansen:

Rice Operating Company (ROC) takes this opportunity to submit the Junction Box Upgrade results for the year 2009. Enclosed is a list of the completed junction boxes and their respective closure/disclosure dates. These boxes are located in the Vacuum Salt Water Disposal (SWD) System.

ROC completed 20 junction boxes in 2009. Vacuum System Partners have decided to abandon the Vacuum SWD System. In 2010, junction boxes will continue to be evaluated with the objective of abandonment of the System.

Enclosed are the 2008 results (17 sites evaluated with 22 sampling locations) from the PID/BTEX study described in the NMOCD-approved Revised Junction Box Upgrade Work Plan (July 16, 2003). A third-party analysis, conducted by Peter Galusky, Jr. Ph.D. of Texerra, concluded from the data collected thus far that field-composited values tend to produce slightly higher BTEX numbers above the point at which BTEX concentrations become significant. This is likely due to the fact that BTEX is volatile and quickly biodegradable. This analysis was submitted to NMOCD on March 12, 2009. An appropriate number of sample sites could not be obtained to conduct a 2009 BTEX comparison analysis. Peter Galusky, Jr. Ph.D. of Texerra also compared ROC's 2009 chloride field tests to chloride laboratory analyses; the analysis is also

enclosed. The study of this data continues to validate the accuracy of the chloride field tests employed by ROC.

ROC is the service provider (agent) for the Vacuum SWD System and has no ownership of any portion of the pipeline, well, or facility. The System is owned by a consortium of oil producers, System Parties, who provide all operating capital on a percentage ownership/usage basis. Upgrade/closure projects of this magnitude require System Party AFE approval and work beings as funds are received. The Vacuum SWD System has been abandoned.

Thank you for your consideration of this Junction Box Upgrade Report for 2009.

RICE OPERATING COMPANY

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Conder', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Hack Conder  
Environmental Manager

enclosures as stated

cc: SC, MB, file,      Mr. Larry Hill  
                                 NMOCD, District I Office  
                                 1625 N. French Drive  
                                 Hobbs, NM 88240

**L. Peter Galusky, Jr. Ph.D., P.G.**

**Texerra**

**505 N Big Spring, Suite 404 Midland, Texas 79701**

**Tel: 432-634-9257 E-mail: lpg@texerra.com**

March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009

Mr. Brad Jones  
New Mexico Energy, Minerals, & Natural Resources  
Oil Conservation Division, Environmental Bureau  
1220 S. St. Francis Drive  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504

Re: Comparison of Field versus Lab Compositing of BTEX soil samples  
Rice Operating Company, Junction Box Upgrade Work Plan

Sent via Certified Mail w/ Return Receipt No. 7006 0100 0001 2438 3944

Dear Mr. Jones:

On behalf of Rice Operating Company (ROC) I am submitting the attached comparison and analysis of field versus laboratory soil compositing for soil BTEX samples. This is to address the question of whether it is better to mix multiple samples in the field or to do so in the laboratory in order to produce a composite, representative sample for analysis. This work was undertaken in support of ROC's Junction Box Upgrade Work Plan to ensure the quality of their field analysis program.

In brief, this work indicates that field compositing of soil samples generally gives rise to *slightly* higher BTEX values than does laboratory compositing of multiple samples. This is presumably due to the likelihood that field compositing and packaging of soil samples better preserves sample integrity. It would therefore appear that field compositing would represent the better method of procuring soil samples for subsequent analysis of BTEX.

Please call me if you have any questions or wish to discuss any of the details of this study.

ROC is the service provider (agent) for various Salt Water Disposal Systems (SWDs) and has no ownership of any portion of pipeline, well or facility. The SWD Systems that ROC operates are owned by a consortium of oil producers, System Partners, who provide all operating capital on a percentage ownership/usage basis.

Sincerely,



L. Peter Galusky, Jr. Ph.D.  
Principal

Copy: Rice Operating Company,  
Edward Hansen (NMOCD) sent certified mail w/ return receipt  
No. 7006 0100 0001 2438 3937

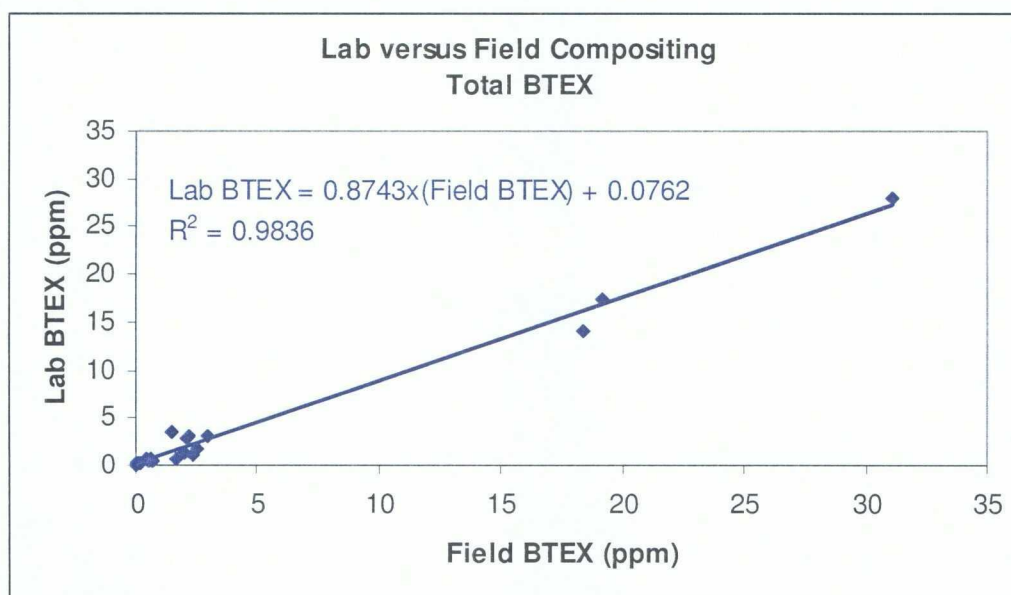
Attachment: As noted, above.

## Rice Operating Company

### Comparison of Field Compositing versus Laboratory Compositing of Soil BTEX Samples<sup>1</sup>

The careful mixing of multiple soil samples is critical in order to produce a representative, composite sample from a respective study area (such as an excavation face or bottom). Field technicians typically take four or five “grab” samples from excavation walls and/or bottom and send each of these to a laboratory for analysis of the composite, or mixed, sample. It would be far simpler, however, to composite such samples in the field. This study was undertaken to determine if field compositing produced results substantially different than laboratory compositing for the analysis of BTEX. Data were provided by Rice Operating Company encompassing 22 sampling locations over the period of 2004 through 2008.

A comparison of lab-composited soil samples versus field-composited soil samples revealed a close correspondence for total BTEX between the two methods (Figure 1).



**Figure 1** - Laboratory versus field-composited soil samples analyzed for BTEX.

The high R<sup>2</sup> value (0.9836) of the best-fit statistical regression line indicates a high degree of reliability in using the field-compositing method over the range of values observed. Below a “field-composited BTEX” value of 0.61 ppm the “lab-composited BTEX” values are slightly lower. However, above a field-composited BTEX value of 0.61 the lab-composited values run slightly lower. In other words, the field-composited values tended to produce slightly higher BTEX numbers above the point at which BTEX concentrations become significant.

There is a reason for this. BTEX is volatile and quickly biodegradable. The compositing and “packaging” of soil samples in the field minimize the handling and aeration that occur in the laboratory. Thus, field-composited soil samples lose less BTEX to evaporation and/or biodegradation prior to laboratory analysis. In other words, the field compositing and packaging of soil samples better preserves sample integrity, and for this reasons would appear to represent the better method of procuring soil samples for subsequent analysis of BTEX.

<sup>1</sup> Prepared 03-12-09 by L. Peter Galusky, Jr. of Texerra.

**L. Peter Galusky, Jr. Ph.D., P.G.**

**Texerra**

**505 N Big Spring, Suite 404 Midland, Texas 79701**

**Tel: 432-634-9257 E-mail: [lpg@texerra.com](mailto:lpg@texerra.com)**

April 1st, 2010

Mr. Edward Hansen  
New Mexico Energy, Minerals, & Natural Resources  
Oil Conservation Division, Environmental Bureau  
1220 S. St. Francis Drive  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504

Re: Comparison of 2009 Field versus Laboratory Measured Soil Chloride Values  
Rice Operating Company, Junction Box Upgrade Work Plan

Sent via Certified Mail w/ Return Receipt No. 7007 0710 0003 0305 3842

Mr. Hansen:

On behalf of Rice Operating Company (ROC) I am submitting the attached comparison and analysis of 2009 field versus laboratory measured soil chloride values. This work was undertaken in support of ROC's Junction Box Upgrade Work Plan to ensure the quality of their field analysis program.

In brief, this work indicates that Rice's 2009 field chloride measurement efforts provided reliable and accurate estimates of the true values.

ROC is the service provider (agent) for various Salt Water Disposal Systems (SWDs) and has no ownership of any portion of pipeline, well or facility. The SWD Systems that ROC operates are owned by a consortium of oil producers, System Parties, who provide all operating capital on a percentage ownership/usage basis.

Please call me if you have any questions or wish to discuss any of the details of this study.

Sincerely,



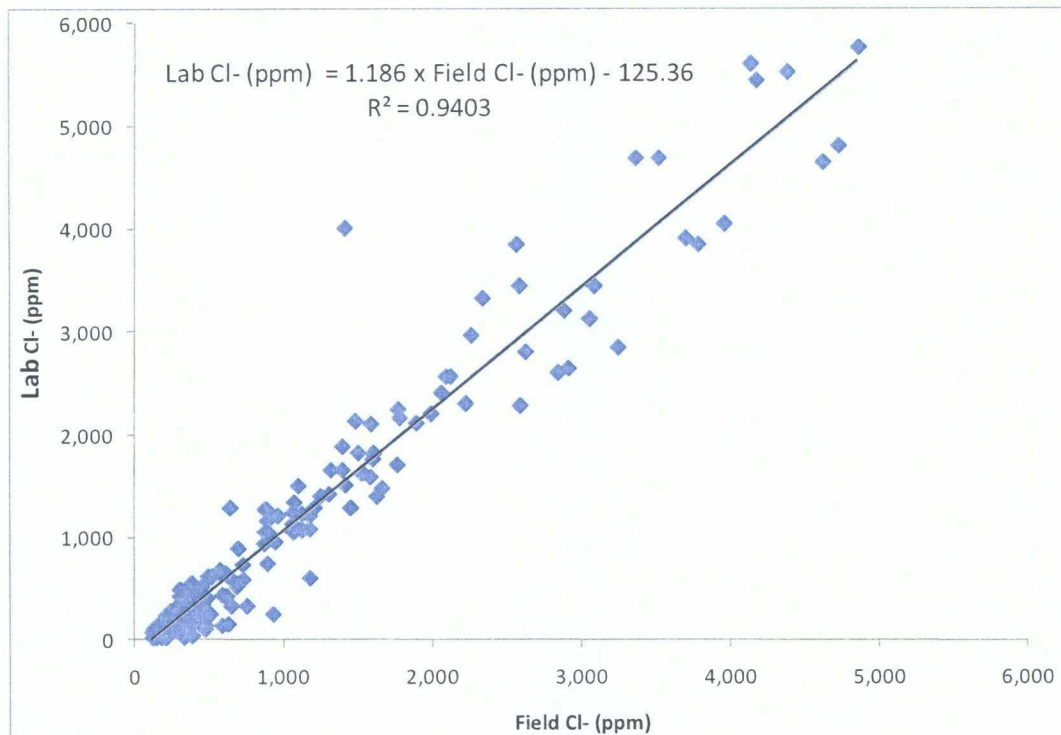
L. Peter Galusky, Jr. Ph.D.  
Principal

Copy: Rice Operating Company

Attachment: As noted, above.

**Rice Operating Company**  
**Comparison of Laboratory to Field Measured Soil Chloride Concentrations**  
**Based upon 2009 Field Data<sup>1</sup>**

A representative sample of 217 pairs of field versus laboratory measured soil chloride values was compared to determine how well field measurements matched laboratory measurements. It is assumed that laboratory measurements better represent the “true” values due to the controlled environment that a laboratory provides. A simple plot of the laboratory versus field measured soil chloride values is given below (Figure 1).



**Figure 1** – Laboratory versus field measured soil chloride measurements (n = 217 paired sets).

A straight line fits the data very well, and the high  $R^2$  value (0.94), indicates that field measurements are highly reliable (repeatable and consistent) over a wide range of field-measured soil chloride concentrations. The best-fit regression equation illustrates that field-measure chloride values will somewhat overestimate the laboratory values up to a field-measured value of approximately 675 ppm. At substantially higher chloride concentrations, field-measured values will slightly underestimate the laboratory values.

This comparison indicates that Rice field-measured soil chloride values provide reliable and conservative estimates for low to moderate soil chloride concentrations. Although the field measured values are slightly lower (by approximately 10%) for extremely high (> 2,000 ppm) soil chloride values, they nevertheless reliably indicate their relative magnitude. Taken together this comparison indicates that Rice’s 2009 field chloride measurement efforts provided reliable and accurate estimates of the true (laboratory measured) values.

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<sup>1</sup> Prepared on 04-01-10 by L. Peter Galusky, Jr. of Texerra.

**Rice Operating Company**  
**Vacuum SWD System Junction Box Upgrade Project**  
**2009 Completed Boxes**

		Legal Description							
	Jct Box Name	Unit	Sec	T	R	Completion Date	OCD Assessment Score	Report Status	Case Number
1	B-27 Vent	B	27	17	35	6/18/2009	20	Closure	
2	Marathon McAlister EOL	M	25	17	34	2/9/2009	10	Closure	
3	Jct J-7	J	7	18	35	6/18/2009	10	Closure	
4	Jct E-8	E	8	18	35	6/18/2009	10	Closure	
5	Jct C-36-1	C	36	17	34	5/28/2009	10	Closure	
6	Jct C-7	C	7	18	35	2/9/2009	10	Closure	
7	Jct C-6	C	6	18	35	6/18/2009	10	Closure	
8	Jct A-31	A	31	17	35	4/8/2009	0	Closure	
9	Jct A-7	A	7	18	35	6/18/2009	10	Closure	
10	E-29 EOL	E	29	17	35	6/18/2009	10	Closure	
11	Jct C-31-2	C	31	17	35	6/19/2009	20	Disclosure	
12	Jct D-31	D	31	17	35	4/17/2009	0	Disclosure	
13	Jct F-31	F	31	17	35	4/7/2009	30*	Disclosure	
14	Jct A-36	A	36	17	34	5/29/2009	10	Disclosure	
15	Jct C-31 (2 boxes)	C	31	17	35	6/8/2009	0	Disclosure	
16	N-28 Vent	N	28	17	35	6/18/2009	10	Disclosure	
17	K-28-2 Vent	K	28	17	35	6/18/2009	10	Disclosure	
18	Jct K-28-1	K	28	17	35	6/18/2009	10	Disclosure	
19	D-31 EOL	D	31	17	35	6/8/2009	20	Disclosure	



### Junction Box Upgrade Program Closure/Disclosure Submissions for 2009

Updated 4-1-10

<b>BD</b>																		Closures	Disclosures
Closure	29																	29	
Disclosure	11																		11
<b>EME</b>																			
Closure	31																	31	
Disclosure	4																		4
<b>Vacuum</b>																			
Closure	10																	10	
Disclosure	10																		10
<b>Justis</b>																			
Closure	1																	1	
Disclosure	3																		3
<b>Hobbs</b>																			
Closure	8																	8	
Disclosure	0																		0
<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>																	<b>79</b>	<b>28</b>