



YATES BUILDING - 207 SOUTH 4TH ST.  
ARTESIA, NEW MEXICO - 88210

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DEC 21 1972

O. C. C.  
ARTESIA, OFFICE

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PRESIDENT  
MARTIN YATES, III  
VICE PRESIDENT  
JOHN A. YATES  
VICE PRESIDENT  
B. W. HARPER  
SEC. TREAS.

December 20, 1972

Mr. W. A. Gressett, Supervisor  
New Mexico Oil Conservation Commission  
P. O. Drawer DD  
Artesia, New Mexico 88210

Re: Drilling Well Fire, Nickson BM #2, Unit A,  
Section 30-18-26, Eddy County, New Mexico

Dear Mr. Gressett:

On Sunday, December 17, 1972, about 10:45 P.M., Cactus Drilling Company Rig #59 was drilling in the San Andres formation at a depth of 1344 feet. The morning tour Driller had just come on duty and observed the well kicking water onto the floor. He informed the undersigned by radio that he had drilled into an air pocket. I instructed him to circulate the well good and that I would be there soon.

When I arrived on location the well was kicking sulfur water above the derrick floor as high as the kelly swivel which was about 32 feet above the floor. The Toolpusher informed me that they had drilled into an air pocket and that he expected it would subside soon. There was no gas odor on the floor. Nevertheless, I ordered two transports of brine and a third transport which we loaded with salt water and pumped into the well. The flow appeared to be subsiding, but while attempting to pump brine into the well, the well blew out and the gas ignited by a spark from an engine at about 5:00 A.M., December 18, 1972. The rig was destroyed. By Tuesday morning the well effluent had