

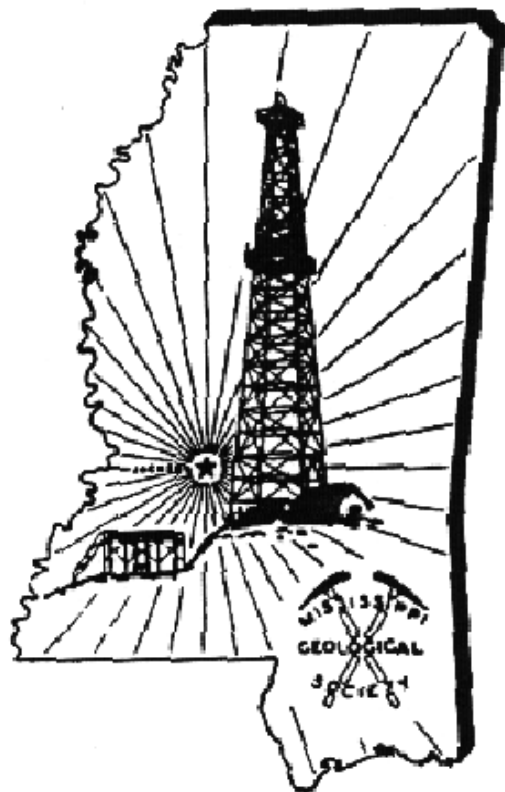
Volume 55

No. 5

January 2007

# MISSISSIPPI GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY e bulletin

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~ **PRESIDENT'S LETTER** ~  
**Bob Schneeflock**

Society Brethren,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of MGS, I wish each of you a healthy and prosperous 2007.

Our speaker for January will be Dr. Berry H. "Nick" Tew, Jr., State Geologist of Alabama and State Oil & Gas Supervisor. Nick used to be a geologist here in Jackson with Cities Service and is a personal friend to many of us and is a longtime friend to our society. He will bring us up to date on the modernization of the Alabama State Oil and Gas Board and the scope of information available through his agency.

This month, the MGS brethren who have given us email addresses will receive the first e bulletin of the Mississippi Geological Society (along with your regular paper bulletin). The e bulletin is a work in progress and will be phased into full production throughout 2007. At present, it is black and white but will be phased into color as we learn to manage file sizes. Each month you will be sent a link to the MGS website where the .PDF file will be located. Adobe reader is free and can be downloaded at the MGS website or just google adobe reader. If you have any problems, just call Vaughn Watkins.

Many thanks to those who paid their MGS dues for '06-'07. We will publish a list of paid members in the February bulletin with special thanks.

'till next time  
bs



*Here's to a safe, healthy,  
and prosperous year  
for all of us.*

**In This Issue:**

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MGS Advertising Notice

"Success is the ability to go from one failure to another with no loss of enthusiasm"

--Winston Churchill

## MGS MEETING SCHEDULE

When	What	Where
September 14, 2006	Fall BBQ	Jackson Yacht Club
October 19, 2006	David Scott & Lisa Ivshin, MS O&G Board	River Hills
November 1, 2006	Ernie Mancini, University of AL	River Hills
December 9, 2006	MAPL/MGS Christmas Party	Colonial Country Club
January 11, 2007	Nick Tew, Ala Geol Survey	River Hills
February 8, 2007	TBA	River Hills
March 8, 2007	TBA	River Hills
April 12, 2007	TBA	River Hills
May 10, 2007	Spring Fling	Jackson Yacht Club

Dr. Berry H. "Nick" Tew, Jr., a native Alabamian, was appointed State Geologist of Alabama in October 2002. Born in Mobile and raised in Sumter County, he has received BS, MS, and PhD degrees in Geology. As State Geologist, Dr. Tew also serves as State Oil & Gas Supervisor and Secretary of the Oil and Gas Board and is the 6th individual to serve in this position since the establishment of the Board in 1945. He has a comprehensive knowledge of Alabama's surface and subsurface geology through his 21 years of professional geological experience that includes petroleum exploration and development. He is a professional geologist licensed by the Alabama State Board of Licensure for Professional Geologists, a member of the Geological Society of America, and is a 21-year member of the American Association for Petroleum Geologists.

### OFFICERS MEETINGS

September 6, 2006  
 October 3, 2006  
 November 7, 2006  
 None in December  
 January 2, 2007  
 February 6, 2007  
 March 6, 2007  
 April 3, 2007  
 May 1, 2007

## Brief Summary

### New On-Shore Regulations Regarding Mississippi Oil, Gas & Mineral Leases

1. The rules recently adopted are essentially those that have served the state-owned minerals well for more than 60 years. The rules have been updated for the latest technology such as 3D seismic, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and newer, more rigorous environmental regulations and safe guards have been put in place.
2. The onshore and offshore rules and regulations have been separated. In the years before one set of rules and regulations served for both. The rules and regulations recently adopted pertain only to on-shore leasing and seismic permitting.
3. There has been no change in the rules regarding the way we approach our stewardship responsibilities concerning activity on state-owned lands. In the past, there have been no unsolvable problems in working out arrangements between companies and the state agencies regarding state-owned minerals in operationally or environmentally sensitive areas. Historically, there have always been solutions available that could resolve or work around any issues. The use of modern technologies will only improve the options and safety.
4. Although the mineral lease program does not enjoy a large oil and gas related income at present, one good discovery on state minerals will cause dramatic increases. From 1991 to 2003 the leasing and royalty income averaged about \$30,000/yr. These were slow years for oil and gas exploration activity.
5. The state does not own all or perhaps most of the minerals under individual state parks and wildlife management areas. Oil and gas activities will take place on those lands where the State does not own the minerals. To restrict the state from leasing it's minerals under state parks and wildlife management areas will not prevent oil and gas activities on those lands. It will prevent the state from reaping the benefits of successful exploration and production.

To review the new rules & regulations for mineral leasing & seismic permitting, go to [www.mississippi.org](http://www.mississippi.org) & look under Programs for Mineral Leases.

Jack Moody

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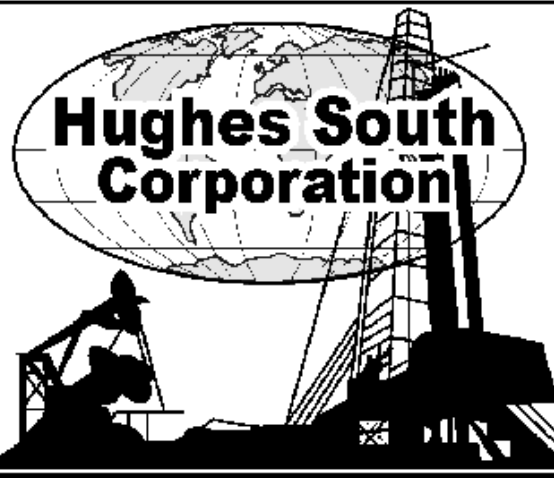
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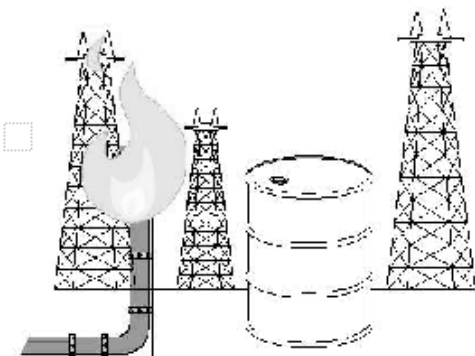
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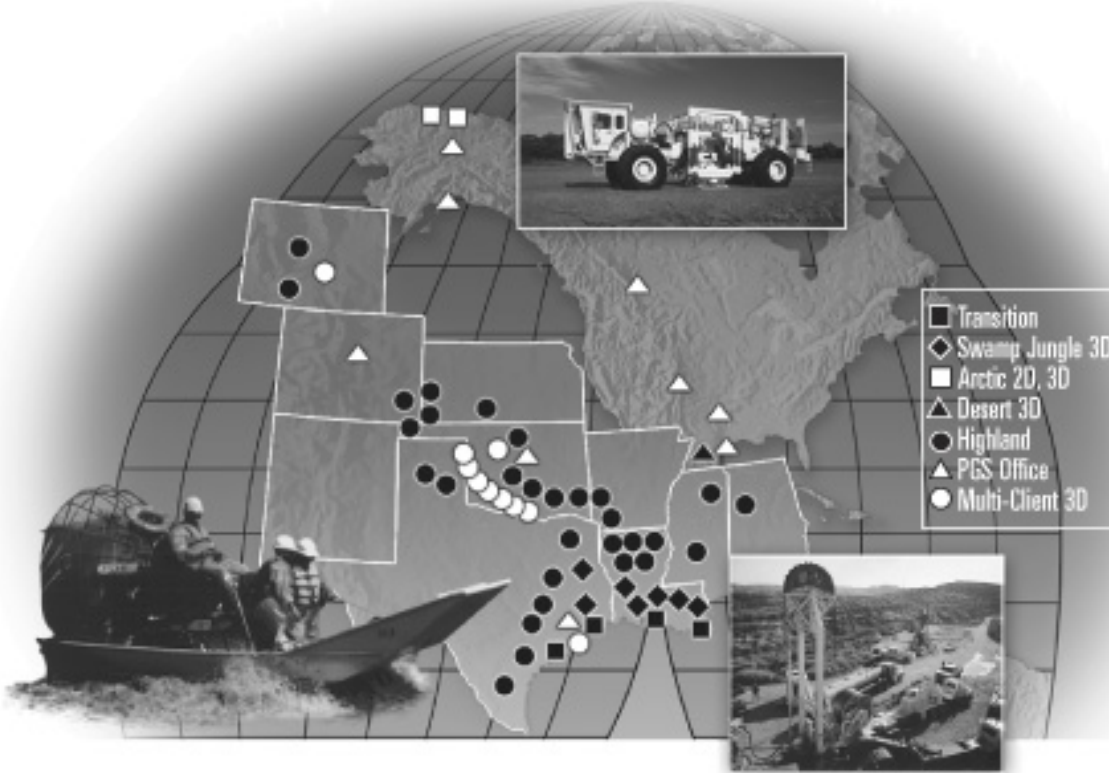
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October 2006 from Consumer Reports submitted by Maurice Birdwell

## The ethanol myth

Consumer Reports' E85 tests show that you'll get cleaner emissions but poorer fuel economy ... if you can find it

The Bush administration has been pushing ethanol as a renewable, homegrown alternative to gasoline. Now, the auto industry is abuzz with the promise of its flexible-fuel vehicles (FFVs), which are designed to run on either gasoline or the blend of 85 percent ethanol and 15 percent gasoline called E85.

GM's advertising says, "Energy independence? The answer may be growing in our own backyard," and has coined the slogan "Live green, go yellow," referring to the corn from which most U.S. ethanol is made. DaimlerChrysler, Ford, and GM have said that they plan to double production of FFVs and other biofuel vehicles to 2 million by 2010.

A recent Harris Interactive study of vehicle owners found that more than half were interested in purchasing an FFV, mostly for reduced dependency on petroleum and improved fuel economy.

But after putting a 2007 Chevrolet Tahoe FFV through an array of fuel economy, acceleration, and emissions tests, and interviewing more than 50 experts on ethanol fuel, *CR* determined that E85 will cost consumers more money than gasoline and that there are concerns about whether the government's support of FFVs is really helping the U.S. achieve energy independence. Among our findings:

The fuel economy of the Tahoe dropped 27 percent when running on E85 compared with gasoline, from an already low 14 mpg overall to 10 mpg (rounded to the nearest mpg). This is the lowest fuel mileage we've gotten from any vehicle in recent years.

With the retail pump price of E85 averaging \$2.91 per gallon in August, according to the Oil Price Information Service, which tracks petroleum and other fuel prices, a 27 percent fuel-economy penalty means drivers would have paid an average of \$3.99 for the energy equivalent of a gallon of gasoline.

When we calculated the Tahoe's driving range, we found that it decreased to about 300 miles on a full tank of E85 compared with about 440 on gasoline. So you have to fill up more often with E85.

The majority of FFVs are large vehicles like the Tahoe that get relatively poor fuel economy even on gasoline. So they will cost you a lot at the pump, no matter which fuel you use.

Because E85 is primarily sold in the upper Midwest, most drivers in the country have no access to the fuel, even if they want it. For our Tahoe test, for example, we had to blend our own .

The FFV surge is being motivated by generous fuel-economy credits that auto-makers get for every FFV they build, even if it never runs on E85. This allows them to pump out more gas-guzzling large SUVs and pickups, which is resulting in the consumption of many times more gallons of gasoline than E85 now replaces.

We put the Tahoe through our full series of fuel-economy and acceleration tests while running on each fuel. When running on E85 there was no significant change in acceleration. Fuel economy, however, dropped across the board. In highway driving, gas mileage decreased from 21 to 15 mpg; in city driving, it dropped from 9 to 7 mpg.

You could expect a similar decrease in gas mileage in any current FFV. That's because ethanol has a lower energy content than gasoline: 75,670 British thermal units per gallon instead of 115,400, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. So you have to burn more fuel to generate the same amount of energy. In addition, FFV engines are designed to run more efficiently on gasoline. E85 fuel economy could approach that of gasoline if manufacturers optimized engines for that fuel.

When we took our Tahoe to a state-certified emissions-test facility in Connecticut and had a standard emissions test performed, we found a significant decrease in smog-forming oxides of nitrogen when using E85. Ethanol, however, emits acetaldehyde, a probable carcinogen and something that standard emissions-testing equipment is not designed to measure. But that might be a relatively minor evil. "Acetaldehyde is bad," says James Cannon, president of Energy Futures, an alternative-transportation publication, "but not nearly as bad as some of the emissions from gasoline."

## CR QUICK TAKES

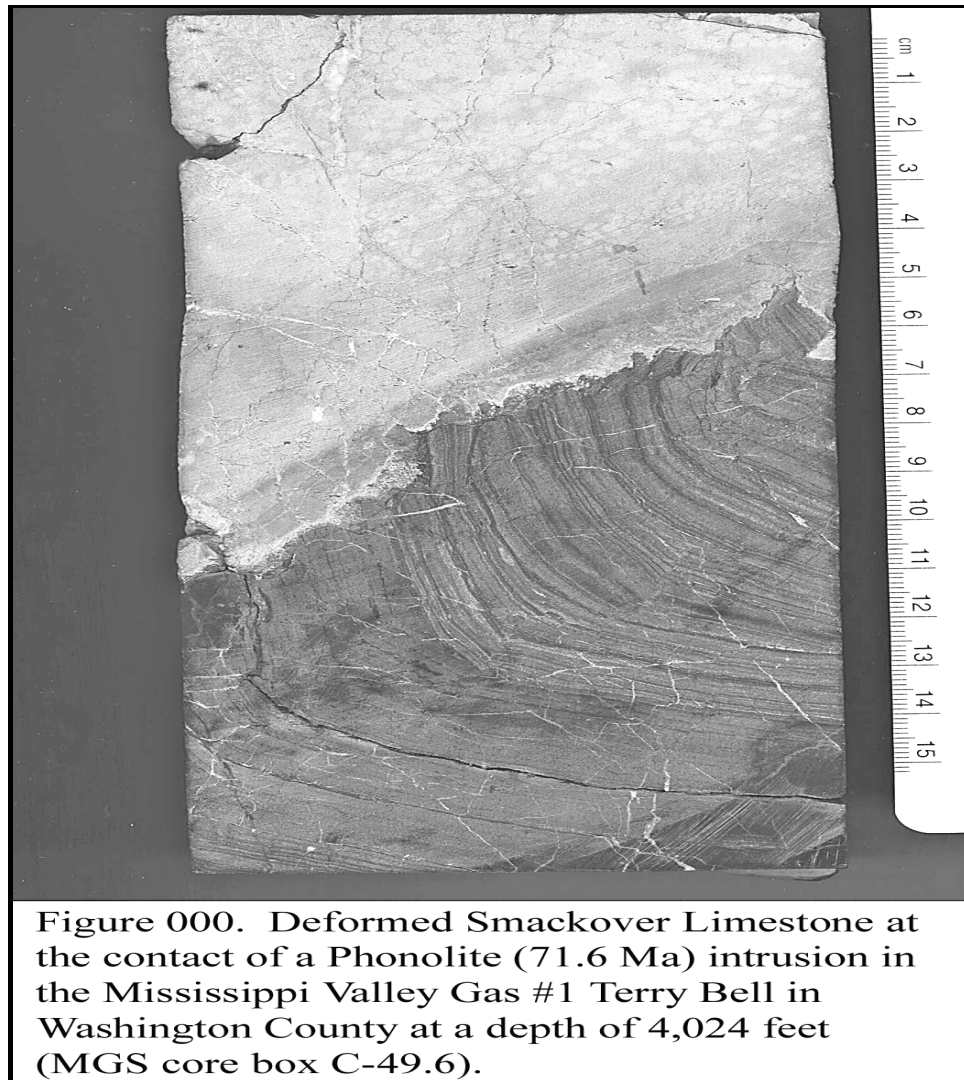
Despite the avid support of the Bush administration and major American car companies, E85 is unlikely to fill more than a small percentage of U.S. energy needs.

- E85, which is 85 percent ethanol, emits less smog-causing pollutants than gasoline, but provides fewer miles per gallon, costs more, and is hard to find outside the Midwest.
- Government support for flexible-fuel vehicles, which can run on E85, is indirectly causing more gasoline consumption rather than less.
- Most ethanol is being blended in a 10 percent mix to reduce smog-producing emissions and stretch gasoline supplies.

## Another Core Illustrated in "The Geology of Mississippi."

David T. Dockery III and James E. Starnes

The half core illustrated from the #1 Terry Bell well at a depth of 4,024 feet shows the contact of a 72-million-year-old phonolite intrusion against a deformed layered section of Smackover Limestone. Similar intrusive rocks of about the same age occur in the volcanic complex beneath Jackson, Mississippi. A chill zone can be seen in the phonolite adjacent the contact. This image was scanned on a flat-bed scanner. We are soliciting addition core for photography and inclusion in "The Geology of Mississippi."







THIS MAY COME AS A SURPRISE TO THOSE OF YOU NOT LIVING IN LAS VEGAS, BUT THERE ARE MORE CATHOLIC CHURCHES THAN CASINOS.

NOT SURPRISINGLY, SOME WORSHIPPERS AT SUNDAY SERVICES WILL GIVE CASINO CHIPS RATHER THAN CASH WHEN THE BASKET IS PASSED.

SINCE THEY GET CHIPS FROM MANY DIFFERENT CASINOS, THE CHURCHES HAVE DEVISED A METHOD TO COLLECT THE OFFERINGS.

THE CHURCHES SEND ALL THEIR COLLECTED CHIPS TO A NEARBY FRANCISCAN MONASTERY FOR SORTING AND THEN THE CHIPS ARE TAKEN TO THE CASINOS OF ORIGIN AND CASHED IN.

THIS IS DONE BY THE CHIP MONKS.

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The Mississippi Academy of Sciences  
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### Natural Gas Spot Henry Hub

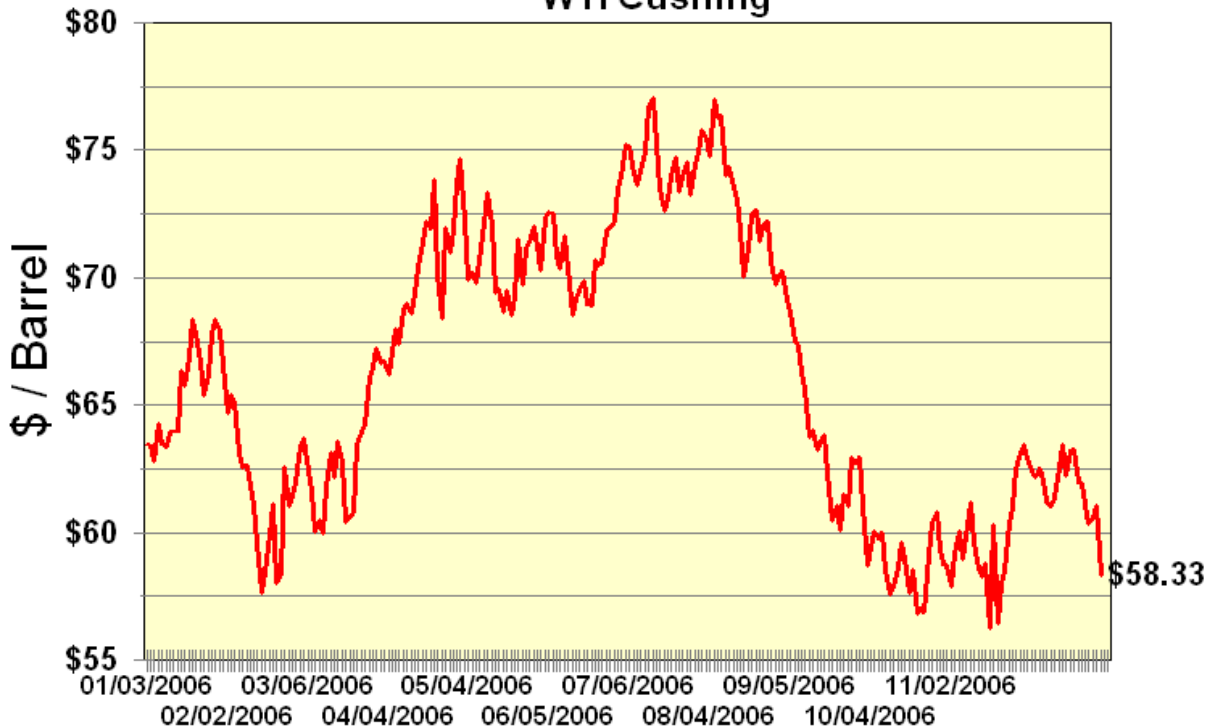


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### Crude Oil Spot WTI Cushing



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## North American Rotary Rig Counts

The U.S. rotary rig count was down 13 rigs to 1,710 for the week of December 29, 2006 and is 16.2 percent higher than last year.

The number of rotary rigs drilling for oil is down 1 at 278. The number of rigs targeting oil is 43 rigs higher than last year's level of activity. Rigs currently drilling for oil represent 16.3% percent of total drilling activity.

Rigs directed toward natural gas were down 13 at 1,425. The number of rigs currently drilling for gas is 191 greater than last year's level of 1,234.

Year-over-year oil exploration in the US is up 18.3 percent. Gas exploration is up 15.5 percent. The weekly average of crude oil spot prices is 1.5 percent higher than last year and natural gas spot prices are 42.9 percent lower. Daily crude oil and natural gas futures and spot prices are available on our site.

Canadian rig activity\* was down 21 at 429 for the week of December 29, 2006 and is 65 higher than last year's rig count. Canadian drilling falls rapidly in the spring to avoid environmental damage during the spring thaw and rainy season.

\*The Canadian drilling industry experiences wide seasonal swings and even year over year comparisons can lead to incorrect conclusions.

### North American Rig Count

	12/29/06	12/22/06	12/30/05	Change		Percent Change	
				Weekly	Annual	Weekly	Annual
Total U.S.	1,710	1,723	1,471	(13)	239	-0.8%	16.2%
Offshore	84	84	80	0	4	0.0%	5.0%
Land	1,626	1,639	1,391	(13)	235	-0.8%	16.9%
Inland Waters	22	22	19	0	3	0.0%	15.8%
Oil	278	279	235	(1)	43	-0.4%	18.3%
Percent	16.3%	16.2%	16.0%	0.1%	0.3%		
Gas	1,425	1,438	1,234	(13)	191	-0.9%	15.5%
Percent	83.3%	83.5%	83.9%	-0.1%	-0.6%		
Directional	382	385	352	-3	30	-0.8%	8.5%
Horizontal	337	330	222	7	115	2.1%	51.8%
Gulf of Mexico	81	81	75	0	6	0.0%	8.0%
Gulf Oil	1	1	36	0	-35	0.0%	-97.2%
Percent	1.2%	1.2%	48.0%	0.0%	-46.8%		
Gulf Gas	80	80	39	0	41	0.0%	105.1%
Percent	98.8%	98.8%	52.0%	0.0%	46.8%		
Canada	429	450	364	(21)	65	-4.7%	17.9%
North America	2,139	2,173	1,835	(34)	304	-1.6%	16.6%





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