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News from Commissioner Dana Murphy



MEDIA ADVISORY – ONGOING OCC EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE

With the start of the new year, Oklahoma Corporation Commissioner Dana Murphy wants to be sure all are aware of the latest developments in the agency’s ever-evolving earthquake response, and the areas of greatest concern (map attached – the diameter for each area is six miles) .

“As I’ve said before, it’s very important for everyone to be kept informed and understand what’s being done,” said Murphy. “At the same time, it should be stressed that additions or changes are possible at any time. We know far more now than we did three years ago, but there is obviously much more to be learned.”

Among the newer developments:

- The Commission’s “yellow light” permitting program now extends the area of seismicity review for any proposed disposal well to those:
 - proposed within 3 miles of a seismically active fault
 - proposed within 3 miles of a stressed fault, even in the absence of seismicity
 - proposed within 6 miles (10 kilometers) of an earthquake “swarm”
- A new rule has been proposed to require disposal well operators to notify the Commission at the start of a disposal well’s initial injection.
- New rules have gone into effect increasing from monthly to daily the required recording of well pressure and volume from disposal wells that dispose into the Arbuckle formation (the state’s deepest injection formation).
- Under the new rules, Mechanical Integrity Tests for wells disposing of volumes of 20,000 barrels a day or more have increased from once every five years to every year, or more often if so directed by the Commission.
- For those wells injecting into the state’s deepest formation (the Arbuckle), any question regarding the well’s actual depth must be addressed using modern technology to determine true depth. If there is any issue with depth, the well is directed to be shut-in and cannot be restarted until such issue is addressed and permission for restart received from the oil and gas division.
- The OCC is beginning a joint project with the Oklahoma Secretary of Energy and Environment that will provide essential reservoir and other data on the Arbuckle formation.

- Recent staff changes within the OCC's Oil and Gas Conservation Division will allow key staffers to devote their entire work day to the issue of seismicity.
- The OCC is an active participant on Governor Fallin's Coordinating Council on Seismic Activity.

But Murphy is quick to add this is not a 'final plan.'

"What we are doing now is the result of an open, flexible process based on sound scientific data, and driven by the utmost necessity to address this issue," Murphy said. "Above all, that process must and will continue."

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