

Wednesday, September 14, 2011

Black Lab Pub, Churchill Room • 4100 Montrose Blvd.

Social 5:30 p.m., Dinner 6:30 p.m.

Cost: \$25 Preregistered members; \$30 non-members & walk-ups

To guarantee a seat, you must pre-register on the HGS website and pre-pay with a credit card.

Pre-registration without payment will not be accepted.

You may still walk up and pay at the door, if extra seats are available.

# HGS Environmental & Engineering Dinner Meeting

W.C. Rusty Riese, Ph.D., P.G.

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## AAPG Distinguished Ethics Lecture, 2011-2013 Oil Spills, Ethics, and Society: How They Intersect and Where the Responsibilities Reside

I ncreasing global demand for energy has forced societies the world over to look for and use ever more diverse and expensive forms of energy to fuel their economies. Oil is a key part of this energy supply, particularly in the arena of transportation fuels. The corporations that supply energy have been pressed into increasingly challenging environments to meet public and governmental demands for inexpensive energy. Unfortunately, as we are reminded by the Gulf of Mexico Deepwater Horizon incident, accidents can happen, the environment can be damaged, and people can lose their lives when we operate at the leading edges of technology.

When accidents occur, our responses typically tend to blame individuals, corporations, or regulators, rather than the public whose demand for cheap, readily available energy forces exploration in new, more challenging frontiers. Public opinions on this subject are shaped by a combination of self-education, fulminating politicians, and aggressive, sensationalist journalists.

Exploring more than societal interests at a national level puts our pursuit of inexpensive energy into context. This context pits the competing interests of developing countries, which demand ever-increasing shares of the world's resources, against broader, trans-national interest groups which are worried that continued dependence on energy-dense fossil fuels may cause runaway global warming and climate changes that may in turn destroy the earth's ecosystems.

Ultimate responsibilities for oil spills lie within this mix of competing demands and expectations – a mix far more complicated than most people are aware of or are willing to consider. All of us who consume energy have an ethical obligation to educate ourselves, and those around us, on the consequences of our demands for energy and for the environment. ■

### Biographical Sketch

DR. W.C. RUSTY RIESE is a geoscientist based in Houston, Texas. He is widely experienced, having worked in both minerals and

petroleum as a geologist, geochemist, and manager during more than 39 years in industry. He participated in the National Petroleum Council evaluation of natural gas supply and demand for North America which was conducted at the request of the Secretary of Energy; in the more recent analysis of global supply and demand requested by the same agency; and in the National Research

Council analysis of coalbed produced waters and their management in the western United States. He is currently a member of the AAPG Committee on Resource Evaluations, and a member of the House of Delegates.

Dr. Riese has written extensively and lectured on various topics in economic geology including biogeochemistry, isotope geochemistry, uranium ore deposits, sequence stratigraphy, and coalbed methane petroleum systems; and he holds numerous domestic and international patents. He has more than thirty years of teaching experience including twenty-five years at Rice University where he developed the curricula in petroleum geology and industry risk and economic evaluation, as well as several other courses. He is currently an Adjunct Professor at Rice University, the Colorado State University, and the University of New Mexico, where he sits on the Caswell Silver Endowment advisory board. He is a fellow in the GSA and the Society of Economic Geologists and a member of the AAPG and several other professional organizations.

He earned his Ph.D. from the University of New Mexico in 1980; his M.S. in geology from the same university in 1977; and his B.S. in geology from the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology in 1973. He is a Certified Professional Geologist, a Certified Petroleum Geologist, and is a Licensed and Registered Geologist in the states of Texas and South Carolina, respectively.

