

Wednesday, January 29, 2014

Petroleum Club • 800 Bell (downtown)  
Social 11:15 AM, Luncheon 11:30 AM

Cost: \$30 pre-registered members; \$35 for non-members/walk-ups;  
Emeritus/Life/Honorary: \$15; Students: FREE

To guarantee a seat, pre-register on the HGS website & pre-pay by credit card.

Pre-registration without payment will not be accepted.

Walk ups may pay at the door if extra seats are available.

## HGS General Luncheon Meeting

W.C. Rusty Riese

Adjunct Professor at Rice University  
and the University of New Mexico  
rusty.riese@gmail.com

AAPG Distinguished Ethics Lecture, 2011-2013

# Oil Spills, Ethics, and Society: How Do They Intersect and Where are the Responsibilities?

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 - cost balance, particularly in the arena of transportation fuels, and the corporations who supply those fuels 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 on technology horizons.

So, when accidents occur what should our responses be? Who is to blame: individuals? corporations? regulators? or the public whose demand for cheap energy spurs exploration in new, more challenging frontiers? And how are public opinions on this subject shaped: by self education? or by fulminating politicians and aggressive, sensational journalism?

This presentation is a discussion of all these questions. It then goes further to explore more than societal interests at a national level: it puts our pursuit of inexpensive energy into context with the competing demands of developing countries seeking ever increasing shares of the world's resources. This will be contrasted with the broader elements in all nations that are worried that continued dependence on energy-dense fossil fuels causing runaway global warming and climate changes will destroy the earth's ecosystems.

Ultimate responsibilities for oil spills lie somewhere in this mix of competing demands and expectations — a mix far more complicated than most people are aware of or consider. ■

### Biographical Sketch

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 forty

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 American



Association of Petroleum Geologists Committee on Resource Evaluations, and a member of the House of Delegates, and past Sections Vice President.

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 eight 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 and the University of New Mexico. He is a fellow in the Geological Society of America and the Society of Economic Geologists; and a member of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists and several other professional organizations.

He earned his PhD 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.

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