

## **2005 report of the AAPG Public Outreach Committee**

### **Lee C. Gerhard, Chair**

Mission statement for AAPG Public Outreach Committee

“We are the public face of our profession.”

The AAPG Public Outreach Committee leads the Association’s science-based efforts to educate adults about oil and gas exploration and production, including the need to sustain a reliable energy supply, reduce environmental impacts, and encourage conservation. The Committee also educates the adult public about the role of AAPG member geologists as creators of global energy wealth, including other fossil and mineral fuels, upon which the global economy and standard of living is based. The Committee will advance the status of AAPG members as scientists engaged in serving society to meet needs for environmentally sound energy.

The methods the committee uses to accomplish its mission include Association and contributor-funded publications, public appearances by its members, communications to media, and information distribution via electronic media.

The committee coordinates its messages with other committees within AAPG and with those of sister societies. The committee will help AAPG develop a central point of contact for public messages.

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The Committee had an active year finishing several long term projects and starting and finishing several others. The Committee finished the year with an attempt to develop a multi-society effort in Public Outreach.

Projects completed:

Publication of the Climate Change wall chart, with the support of the AAPG Foundation.

Publication of “Energy and Environment: A Partnership that Works”, with the support of the AAPG Foundation and Dan Smith.

Three virtual field trips initiated and on the AAPG website:

Anatomy of a Reef (an underwater field trip off the island of St. Croix, U.S.V.I.)

Geology of the Canadian Rockies (a tour of the Canadian Rockies with photographs of unique geologic structures and great geologic scenery)

The Grand Canyon: Geology Is Scenery (from the 1991 Kansas Geological Survey Centennial Rephotographic Expedition)

Projects initiated but not completed:

Primer on Petroleum, by Erling Brostuen: a layman’s guide to oil and gas exploration and production. Funding for printing requested from the AAPG Foundation, waiting on approval and graphics support from the Executive Committee.

Wallet Card on Climate Change: Bill Pollard with Ray Thomasson: Waiting for final edits, unanimously approved in concept by the committee (in full draft form), to be sent to Executive Committee for final approval. Funding may be donated by committee members if necessary.

## Annual Meeting:

Presidents of sister societies were invited to participate in the annual meeting to ascertain interest in joint public outreach efforts. The invitation stated:

Our profession faces serious challenges in supplying the United States and the world with sufficient energy to power society. Without sufficient energy, the divide between “have” and “have not” nations will grow rather than shrink, and people who aspire to a better way of life will be left behind in abject poverty. Addressing the energy supply issue is only partly technical. The remainder is communicating to the public and to governments what their demands and consumption imply, and how those demands can be met.

There are tradeoffs for every public policy, and the United States, for one, has failed to address those tradeoffs. The public and our elected officials do not appear to have sufficient information to make rational decisions about energy supply over the long term, and the result has been serious conflict between aspirations for energy supply and constraints on developing that supply. The current high price of transportation is one result of this conflict, and the high cost of home heating is another.

The American Association of Petroleum Geologists has been searching for a solution to the public education about energy issue, and we have concluded that the issue is too large for us to address alone. Our Public Outreach Committee has developed seminars and published materials, and worked to find media outlets for information, but our efforts have not been successful in publicizing real information that bears upon the legendary energy issues confronting society.

But we have not given up. I invite you or your representative to meet with our Public Outreach Committee leadership on Sunday, June 19, 1:00 pm-3:00 pm, Imperial 1 Room, Hyatt Regency, Calgary, Canada, in conjunction with our annual meeting.

We will address the following questions:

1. What should the profession do to bring the energy resource picture into focus for the public?
2. What can the profession do to bring the energy resource picture into focus for the public?
3. Are there specific projects that joint society work could accomplish?

I hope that the meeting will recommend specific activities that we jointly can pursue.

The results were:

Notes from the AAPG Public Outreach Committee Annual Meeting  
Sunday, June 19, 2005, 1:00-3:00 pm.  
Imperial 1 Room, Hyatt Regency, Calgary, Canada

## Member Attendees:

Lee Gerhard, Chair  
Elmo Brown  
Don Clarke  
Robert Cowdery  
John Dolson  
Robert Jordan

Clint Moore  
Larry Nation  
Don O’Nesky  
Phil Ryall  
Victor Yannacone

Guests:

Terry Young, SEG  
Jack Hess, GSA  
Barry Ashton, SPEE  
Robert Font, AIPG  
Barry Hanson, SPE

Others Present:

Peter Rose, Pres. Elect  
Lee Billingsley, Pres. Elect Elect  
Dan Smith, Past President  
Ray Thomasson, Past President

1. Meeting called to order at 1:00 by Chairman Gerhard, with self introductions and welcome to guests.
2. Chair reported on years activities and accomplishments, including 3 virtual field trips now on the AAPG Website, the publication of the “Energy and Environment: A Partnership that Works” booklet, publication of the Climate Change Wall Chart, and the near completion of the Petroleum Primer.
3. Comments by President Elect Pete Rose. Pete suggested that the issue to be addressed is “how to present science that affects the public to the public” and how be aggressive towards unjustified energy criticisms.
4. Represented sister societies outlined their current public outreach activities.

AIPG: Publish more on what geologists do and how we affect society, coupled with online learning experiences for professionals.

SPEE: Working on better evaluation of reserves technology to meet investor and regulatory demands for better numbers.

GSA: CDs for teachers (3), an Earth Caching program for families, and the Geocorp program.

SEG: CD on :”what is geophysics and what does it do?”

SPE: Struck a committee looking at public outreach 2 years ago, and strives to increase support for Public Outreach, better SPE's members' public image and recruitment, and ensure that their regional directors for public education have support. They also are sources of slides, and visits, and fund a ½ time staff position. Among information sources reviewed was the [centreforenergy.com](http://centreforenergy.com) site which was created with support from Canadian producers and contains materials and information on energy industry in Canada.

RMAG: have published a CD on geology of Dinosaur Ridge and the Denver area.

KGS; Have an extensive program of public and educational contacts, perhaps the class of AAPG affiliated societies. (Larry Nation: send Bob Cowdery a stack of E&E booklets).

Dan Smith, Past President: Need to show the public the truth about energy sources, perhaps do a wallet card on energy sources.

5. Ray Thomasson presented draft materials from a wallet card on climate change that Bill Pollard has created with Ray. After motion and second, committee members unanimously approved the draft in concept, subject to editing. The card will be sent to the Executive Committee for approval and printing after editing.

6. Phil Ryall volunteered to work on a draft for the following Bullet Points or Wallet Cards: 1. Oil, Gas and Coal supplies. 2. Alternative Energy. 3. Environmental Conditions. 4. Oil and Gas uses.

7. The meeting then turned to the questions asked in the invitation to attend:

What should the profession do to bring the energy resource picture into focus for the public?

What can the profession do to bring the energy resource picture into focus for the public?

Are there specific projects that joint society work could accomplish?

After extended discussion, the following three items were selected as needed and doable:

- A. Audit and inventory all the various resources among the sister societies to avoid overlap and duplication.
- B. Build new materials in collaboration with others.
- C. Link society websites and enhance distribution of materials.

Further discussions centered around gaining simplicity and avoiding fragmentation, so that our efforts jointly inform and advocate. Public needs to know that we as a profession are doing our best to provide them with the energy they need in a most responsible way, and that without us, western civilization and standard of living will decline. That we give, we do not take, and that they, the public, are responsible for using our products wisely and without waste.

Things we will do include development of materials including handout wallet cards, linkages between websites, and inventory of resources. We will request that our societies develop a joint committee on Public Outreach to staff volunteers and develop materials to accomplish these goals.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm.

I want to thank all for attending this meeting and joining in the discussions of these important topics. I have enjoyed my three year tenure as chair of this committee and hope that my successor will continue the work we have initiated. I appreciate all the help that all of you have given me and the AAPG during the course of our work.

Lee Gerhard