

**AAPG Annual Meeting
March 10-13, 2002
Houston, Texas**

Stephen W. Lambert¹, Tracy E. Lombardi¹ (1) TICORA Geosciences, Inc, Arvada, CO

Illinois Basin Coal Gas, Unlocking a New Frontier Using Old Keys

Growing development interest in the Illinois Basin provides the Coal Gas Industry an opportunity to apply the experience and perspective gained over the past 25 years to unlock this new frontier more quickly and efficiently than ever before. The primary catalyst in this basin driving most development thus far has been a less expensive target presented by abandoned underground coalmines. As historical frontier operator effort repeats itself, those best positioned for stepping-out from these abandoned mine target sites into the larger basin coal gas resource will be those "who do the science" required to understand the mechanisms of these unique Illinois Basin targets. Although industry experience underscores the need to develop such play-specific technologies, it's focus is on a common set of objectives, i.e. to increase the amount of recoverable resource, develop efficient exploration methods, improve percent resource recovery, and to lower the cost of developing and operating. In the Illinois Basin there exists good opportunities to increase the recognized available resource base through basin assessment studies, and also through operator-organized efforts to establish more visible environmental and regulatory guidelines. There are also early indications that the vertical and lateral distribution of gas content within the basin offers a reasonable foundation to hypothesis and to test basin-specific exploration programs. Industry experience suggests that the generalized shallow depth of this play provides notice to consider low-cost well completion methods that do not substantially depend upon vertically propagated hydraulic fractures for achieving the large percentage recoveries required to satisfy the economics that this basin presents.