

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

Raymond A. Levey<sup>1</sup> (1) Energy & Geoscience Institute at the University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT

## **Research Institutes -- Answering Industry's Call for Applied Research Applications**

During much of the last century, applied scientific research was synonymous with large, corporate laboratories - Bell Labs, GE, Dow, and Exxon. In the '80's and 90's, corporate downsizing, mergers and cutbacks irrevocably altered the research landscape. In an effort to trim costs, companies dismantled internal research operations preferring to outsource all but those specific projects essential for bottom line performance. Further, they dramatically shortened the time horizon for projects and insisted that any remaining research be closely tied and funded by the business unit structure. The need for fundamental and applied research had not diminished; but corporations are increasingly reluctant to risk scarce resources.

Technology or databases long held propriety at large energy companies are transferring to universities. For example, immediately following the merger in 1999, BP Amoco corporation awarded its worldwide composite standards database to EGI at the University of Utah. This unique global database of information and tools for evaluating chronostratigraphic data are the product of nearly 40 years of Amoco research and exploration in more than 100 basins worldwide. Technologies and databases, once held for the benefit of a single organization, are now on the open playing field.

Three years ago who would have thought that our Institute, now 30 years old, would outlast the likes of Amoco, Arco, Mobil, and Texaco. Research institutes must act with the speed and flexibility equal to that of start-up companies. The philosophy of 'better to be a user than an builder of technology' creates a niche for research institutes.