

Strategic Planning the Big Picture: Learning from the Positive Experiences from Companies Operating in Shale Plays

Gary Hanson

Louisiana State University

Abstract

Currently, the oil and gas industry is providing critical skills and technology to discover and produce vital natural resources for society. However, the industry has now recognized regardless of the technology, wells will not get drilled without properly dealing with the social issues that are vital to the public. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability are not just topics emanating from the HR office, but are values and real world tools that must be embraced by all individuals and leadership in the oil and gas culture. For if this is not done, the oil and gas industry as it exists today may not survive. The industry/public relationship is at a stage now where the public is demanding that in order for the industry to continue to operate it must recognize that a social license to perform is required. CSR has its roots in the early days of oil and gas boom towns. Those legacy actions by responsible operators has grown over the decades and now strategic planning utilizing well thought-out internal policies that address these public issues have resulted in successes by many corporations during the current cycle of shale gas and tight oil booms. The industry has been building on decades of interaction with local communities. Philanthropy alone is not sufficient today. Recognition of ongoing efforts, support of these efforts and the ability to bring assistance to education and other elements that empower the community, even after the boom has receded, are vital components of a successful CSR and sustainability program. One established program in the Haynesville shale area involved a watershed institute at a local university where adaptive management approaches are being utilized to enhance socio-economic resilience within the community. A case study of a major operator in the Haynesville shale play is reviewed so that other operators may profit from their efforts and positive experiences.