

## **Discovery and Development the History of Elm Coulee Field (Bakken), Richland County, Montana**

**Bob Larson<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Enerplus

### **ABSTRACT**

Thru 1995 there had been more than 650 wells that had penetrated the Bakken in Richland and southern Roosevelt Counties, Montana. There were a number of DST's and 23 completion attempts but few were economic. Some commonly held beliefs in the industry delayed the discovery. In 1996 a 10 well vertical re-entry program confirmed the viability of re-completions in the middle Bakken but drilling vertical wells specifically for the Bakken was still uneconomic.

In March, 2000, Lyco drilled the first planned horizontal well in the middle Bakken completing it for 196 BO + 85 MCF + 7 BW per day. After watching the production for 6 months a ten well "delineation" program was drilled in 2001 with extremely encouraging results. Additional operators joined in the development and the Field boundaries expanded quickly. By 2007 the field was essentially delineated and increased density drilling dominated the activity with IP averages dropping as the field edges were approached. By 2009 drilling had slowed considerably primarily due to low oil price. Infill drilling picked up in 2010 with a rising oil price and with better completion techniques provided by drilling in ND. Infill drilling is still continuing in Elm Coulee Field which is expected to produce more than 300,000,000 BO on primary.