2021

SPE WESTERN NORTH AMERICA REGIONAL AWARDS

RECIPIENTS
About SPE Regional Awards Program

The Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE) Awards recognize members for their technical contributions, professional excellence, career achievement, service to colleagues, industry leadership, and public service. Regional awards recognize members who contribute exceptional service and leadership within SPE and make significant professional contributions within their technical disciplines at the SPE regional level. Awards are presented in the appropriate SPE Regions and Meetings.

This year’s winners of the Western North America regional awards are 17 exceptional E&P professionals who have demonstrated outstanding talent and dedication to their fields and have earned the votes of their peers and colleagues, and 1 company that has shown outstanding support to the SPE region.
SPE Awardees

Technical Awards:
Technical Awards recognize significant achievements or contributions to the advancement of petroleum engineering in the area of the technical discipline. The recipients' contributions to the technology stand out sharply and help to advance the discipline.
Andy Bond is currently the Subsurface Engineering Manager for Oil Search Alaska. He has worked across the North Slope of Alaska in various capacities from production, well interventions to exploration.

Andy was one of the leaders in improving fracture conductivity at the Kuparuk River Field which led to a large refracturing program in the 1990’s. The next assignment was performing well recompletions and stimulations at Prudhoe Bay. Andy then was working in the exploration area, performing completions, fracture stimulations and well testing of new discoveries. He was in on the ground floor of the Oooguruk initial development on the North Slope and pioneered long horizontal well completions with multi-staged fracture treatments, some of the first in Alaska.

Currently, Andy is helping to develop the subsurface plans for the initial development of the Pikka Field on the North Slope. This development will also consist of long horizontal wells with multi-stage, high conductivity fracture treatments. Andy has been a member of SPE for over 35 years and has served on various committees, as a technical editor and is currently a member of the well completion’s subcommittee.
Andy Bond is a results-driven Oil and Gas Subsurface Manager with a track record in subsurface management, exploration evaluation and testing, strategy development, budget management, and field development planning. Works with integrated and aligned teams to seize new opportunities and to increase operational efficiencies, reduce expenses, and increase profitability. Andy is a leader with proven success in strategic thinking and problem-solving.
Daniel van Zyl has more than 15 years’ experience in drilling, completions, and workovers. He started his career in the Middle East where he managed offshore jack-up rigs, drilling and completing horizontal multi-lateral wells in a mature water flood. From there he moved to the onshore US where he has spent the past 10 years designing and executing wells in the San Joaquin, Ventura, and LA Basins.
Nominator Statement

Daniel has led drilling operations for many years in the difficult offshore and near offshore areas of Southern California. His work accomplishments include:

1. Engineering high angle wells off the THUMS islands in Long Beach harbor.
2. Designing difficult wells off Platform Emmy in the Huntington Beach field..
3. Leading the effort to drill onshore directionally to offshore locations in Huntington Beach.
4. Always being willing to share his knowledge with other engineers.
5. Successfully implementing the most stringent safety and environmental procedures.

Daniel's successful work in the environmentally sensitive Southern California offshore and near offshore oil fields make him a great candidate for this year's Western North America Regional Drilling Award.
Lee Moritz is Subsurface Integration Director at Oil Search Alaska. Lee leads the reservoir engineering function in Alaska while facilitating group collaboration and economic optimization of the Alaska North Slope, Pikka Phase 1 development. Lee brings more than 35 years of experience in reservoir engineering, petroleum engineering, operations, development planning, business planning, reserves, EOR, and subsurface management and has worked in 7 different countries and cultures.

Lee was exposed to a wide array of fields and projects globally, including Alaska, Kuwait, Egypt, Russia, Australia, Vietnam, and Malaysia. Lee has held key technical leadership roles for ConocoPhillips, BP, Apache, Repsol, Talisman, EnQuest, and Oil Search, including Senior Reservoir Engineering Advisor and Subsurface Manager roles. Lee holds a B.S. in Petroleum Engineering from Montana College of Mineral Science and Technology and a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from California State University, Chico. He is an active member of the Society of Petroleum Engineers.
Nominator Statement

A previous colleague K. Zemouri that Arthur or Lee as most people call him managed directly:

"I met Lee when I joined EnQuest Malaysia in 2016, and he reported to me during my time there as Subsurface Manager. I have never seen someone more driven to make a business succeed. He’s a great geologist who provided a continuous stream of opportunities for rate and reserve enhancement and new drilling in Malaysia’s Seligi and PM8 offshore oilfields. He stepped up and helped plan and execute two very successful new wells drilled in Seligi during 2018, including one well now producing over 2,000 BOPD. Zem is a fantastic person to work with. He has a very positive attitude which helped to motivate the team, and he always gets the job done early. He stands up for what he believes in and was instrumental to our success. I was extremely lucky to work with Zem, and I know he has an amazing future ahead. I hope to work with him again!"
Birendra is an assistant professor of petroleum engineering at the University of Southern California. He obtained MS in petroleum engineering from Stanford University and MS and PhD in Civil and Environmental Engineering from MIT. He has seven years of industry experience working for Schlumberger, ConocoPhillips, iReservoir and Occidental Petroleum. His current research at USC includes reservoir characterization and modeling of flow and geomechanical processes that are relevant for mitigating induced seismicity hazard, enhanced oil recovery, geothermal energy, and underground gas storage. Learn more about his research at gemlab.usc.edu
Nominator Statement

Dr. Birendra Jha has outstandingly been contributing to the better evaluation and characterization of subsurface reservoirs by relying on his expertise in formation evaluation, geomechanics, and transport modeling. He teaches courses on Formation Evaluation and Geomechanics at USC and many professionals in California have benefited from his contributions.
Health, Safety and Environment

Kristian Jessen

Kristian is a Professor, Department of Chem. Eng. and Materials Science, University of Southern California, USA. He joined USC in 2006 as Assistant Professor after working at Stanford University, Department of Petroleum Eng. as Research Associate and Acting Faculty (2001-2006). He holds BSc, MSc and PhD degrees in Chem. Eng. from the Technical University of Denmark.
Professor Jessen has significantly contributed to the literature related to subsurface research activities related to carbon dioxide sequestration, modeling, simulation, and experimental work to explain and understand the fundamentals of multiphase multicomponent flow, sorption, and mass transfer in porous materials. He has advanced the fundamental knowledge of these complex processes in the context of environmental safety.
Timothy Nagy graduated from Pennsylvania State University with a degree in Petroleum Engineering in 1980. He started his career as a drilling engineer for Chevron in La Habra CA, and worked a series of drilling assignments in California, Louisiana and Texas. He returned to Bakersfield CA as a production engineer in 1985. After a series of PE supervisory assignments he was posted to Duri Indonesia with Caltex as a production engineer supervisor. He returned to Houston Texas as a reservoir engineer, and later returned to Bakersfield CA as the Petroleum engineering supervisor for the Kern River field.

Following this he went international again in PE Supervisory and reservoir management roles of increasing responsibility for Chevron and affiliates in Venezuela, Kazakhstan, Kuwait and Scotland. He became an asset manager in Thailand in 2008 and later became the regional Asia Pacific reservoir manager. In 2013 he returned to Houston as the North American reservoir manager for Chevron. After retiring from Chevron, he has worked as a petroleum engineering and reservoir management consultant for companies in North America, Mexico, Columbia, Saudi Arabia, and Oman.
Tim has had an outstanding career leading teams in reservoir management throughout the world. He was General Manager of Reservoir Management for Chevron - North America where he was responsible for Petroleum Engineering and Earth Science technical quality assurance of new capital investments for oil and gas development projects. He was also General Manager Reservoir Management for Chevron's Asia operations where he was located in Bangkok, Thailand. He oversaw Chevron's fields in China, Thailand, Bangladesh, Vietnam, and Cambodia. Prior to that he was the Subsurface Team Leader for Chevron in Aberdeen, Scotland, where he was responsible for all production, reservoir engineering, geology, geophysical and drilling activity in the Captain Field. Tim was also the Technical Services Manager for Kuwait Oil Company where his team provided world class reservoir modeling, reservoir management and operating practices for the Burgan Field. He led a team of 40+ professionals provided a broad range of subsurface expertise to KOC to maximize economic recovery from Burgan and aid in exploration of Kuwait. Additionally he was the Reservoir Management Lead in Tengiz, Kazakhstan for Chevron where he managed the production and development of the supergiant Tengiz Field. Planned for field development projects to increase production from 280,000 to 600,000 BOPD.
Mohabbat Ahmadi is an Associate Professor of Petroleum Engineering at the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF). He received his PhD degree from the University of Texas at Austin in 2010. His PhD thesis involved experimental work related to Gas Condensate Reservoir. His current research is focused on reservoir simulation and numerical modeling around application of decline curve models in conventional and unconventional reservoirs. His simulation modeling projects involved Alaska oil fields, including Umiat, West Sak, Orion, and Shublik Shale. He has been a PI or a Co-PI in million-dollar projects and has supervised nearly twenty graduate students. His work has been published in peer-reviewed journals and conference proceedings. He is professionally active as a reviewer for oil and gas journals, books, and grant proposals and also, an advisor to the UAF SPE chapter.
Mohabbat Ahmadi has an undergrad in Petroleum Engineering from Petroleum University of Technology Iran and a Doctorate from The University of Texas At Austin. Mr. Ahmadi has been a professor at UAF since 2011 and has instructed several Petroleum related courses.

Some of his SPE specifics are below:
University of Alaska Chapter Officers Faculty Advisor Nov 2016 Dec 2021
2016 SPE Western Regional Meeting Program Committee Member Dec 2015 Jun 2016

Publications
2008 SPE-116711-MS A New Solution to Restore Productivity of Gas Wells with Condensate and Water Blocks
2010 SPE-133591-MS Chemical Treatment to Mitigate Condensate and Water Blocking in Carbonate Gas Wells
2010 SPE-138124-MS A Novel Chemical Treatment to Enhance Productivity of Volatile Oil Wells
Behnam Jafarpour is an associate professor of Petroleum and Electrical Engineering at the University of Southern California, where he is leading the Subsurface Energy and Environmental Systems (SEES) Lab, and co-directing the USC Foundation-CMG Center for Advanced Reservoir Characterization and Forecasting (ARCF). Dr. Jafarpour earned his SM and PhD degrees in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, and Civil and Environmental Engineering, respectively, from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 2008. His research integrates advanced computational and mathematical tools with the physics of multiphase flow in porous media to solve energy and environmental problems in geosciences, by focusing on (1) imaging and characterization of complex heterogeneous geologic systems, (2) prediction and quantification of subsurface fluid flow and transport processes and their associated uncertainties, and (3) optimal development of subsurface natural resources. Dr. Jafarpour is an active member of SPE and has served as an associate editor of the SPE journal from 2009 to 2014. He is the recipient of the SPE Western North America Region’s Management and Information Award (2015) and Distinguished Faculty Achievement Award (2013), as well as the Outstanding Engineering Educator Award from Orange County Engineering Council (2015), and the SPE Junior Faculty Research Award (2012).
It is a pleasure to nominate Professor Behnam Jafarpour for the SPE Western Regional Reservoir Description and Dynamics Award. Very few individuals have Dr. Jafarpour's level of impact on furthering reservoir modeling (especially inverse modeling and uncertainty quantification considering complex geologic models), subsurface forecasting, and optimization of the reservoir development plan. His diverse academic activities have enabled him to apply his broad multifunctional skills.
Rada Khadjinova is the Alaska general manager for Fugro, the world's leading Geo-data specialist. In this role, she serves as the company's focal point for all land and marine activities in the state, coordinating with technical leads across the country to deliver Alaska clients a complete range of survey, geotechnical, and geoconsulting services.

Ms. Khadjinova joined the company in 2014, bringing with her a background in environmental permitting and project management. She is originally from Russia, where she began her career working with US firms on monumental oil and gas developments offshore Sakhalin Island. She moved to Alaska in 1993 and prior to her time with Fugro, worked as an engineering and environmental project manager at international consultancy firms.

Nominator Statement

Rada V Khadjinova is an experienced senior manager with project management experience in diverse business and government sectors, including 12 years in the Alaska’s oil and gas sector. Ms. Khadjinova's oil and gas experience is in environmental, geo-data and engineering projects ranging from $1 to $80 million in total installed cost (TIC).
Charlene Wardlow is the Northern District Deputy and Geothermal Program Manager for the California Geologic Energy Management Division. She has a B.S. in geology and a M.S. in Petroleum Engineering from the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology in Socorro, NM. She has over 3 decades of experience in the geothermal industry including 23 years at The Geysers involved in oversight of wellfield and power plant operations.

She spent 10-years working for Ormat Technologies, Inc. focused on developing new geothermal projects in California with an emphasis on exploration activities, drilling and well operations, and power plant construction and operations. She supported environmental compliance for existing projects and coordinated permitting and compliance with the local, state, and federal agencies, elected officials including community and public outreach.
Nominator Statement

Charlene has become a nationally recognized technical leader in geothermal energy and as the world—and the SPE member community—is looking to new development, new technology and new applications for geothermal, Charlene has been a strong proponent, instructor and mentor to drive this and other sustainable energy solutions.
Service Awards:

The SPE Regional Services Awards acknowledges exceptional contributions to the Society of Petroleum Engineers at the section or regional level and recognizes singular devotion of time and effort to the programs and development of the member's section and region that set it apart from the services rendered each year by many members of the Society.
Yin Zhang is an Associate Professor in the Department of Petroleum Engineering at the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF). He holds BSc and MASc degrees in petroleum engineering from the China University of Petroleum (East China) and a Ph.D. degree in petroleum systems engineering from the University of Regina. Dr. Zhang's research mainly focused on EOR methods, numerical simulation, determination of petrophysical properties, uncertainty quantification, and produced fluids treatment. Dr. Zhang is the co-PI for the ongoing DOE-funded polymer flood pilot at the Milne Point field (DE-FE0031606) on Alaska North Slope. He was the PI for the Hilcorp Milne Point EOR project. Dr. Zhang was involved in multiple other EOR projects in Canada and China.

Dr. Zhang published over thirty journal articles, and he also participated in almost two dozen conference proceedings, panels, and presentations regarding his research.
Dr. Zhang is an outstanding faculty in teaching and supervising students. He is a productive researcher, and has published over 50 research articles and successfully secured over $8 Million in grant funding. The most notable project is the polymer pilot funded by DOE, which brings new vitality to the Alaskan oil industry. Dr. Zhang also actively provided service to university, local community, and various professional organizations. UAFs SPE student chapter chose him as Faculty of the Year.
Tom Walsh is managing partner and co-founder of Petrotechnical Resources of Alaska, LLC (PRA), an integrated oil and gas consulting firm based in Anchorage, Alaska. Tom has worked as an exploration and production geophysicist on Alaskan oil and gas projects throughout his 41-year career. Since co-founding PRA in 1997, Tom has focused on managing integrated teams of oil and gas consultants in support of E&P projects for major oil and gas companies, independents, and Alaska Native Corporations throughout the State of Alaska.

Tom has been a member of the Society of Petroleum Engineers since 1993, and has served at the local, regional and international levels, including a 3-year term as the Director of the Western North America Region on the SPE Board of Directors from 2012 to 2015. Tom is also active in the American Association of Petroleum Geologists, and the Society of Exploration Geophysicists. Tom served four three-year terms on the Alaska Support Industry Alliance Board of Directors, an oil and gas and mining industry trade association in Alaska. He served as President of the organization in 2020.

Tom and his wife, Chantal, a Professional Petroleum Engineer, are grateful for the opportunity to have participated in the oil and gas industry in Alaska for their full careers, and are thankful for the good fortune to have mentored young engineers and geoscientists in starting their careers in the industry, as they were so mentored by caring and conscientious professionals. The pair are passionate about the importance of the energy industry in our society and have committed much of their spare time to education and advocacy efforts in the community.
Mr. Thomas P. Walsh has over 40 years experience in exploration and development geophysical interpretation and mapping projects across the North Slope of Alaska. Not only as a leader within his career he has donated countless hours to SPE
Ian Johnecheck

Ian Johnecheck is a native Texan and has acted as Project Manager/Engineer on natural gas transmission projects in southern California for Cordoba Corporation since 2019.

Following graduation from the University of Oklahoma in 2015 with a BSc. in Petroleum Engineering, Ian moved to California in search of work. He started his career working on PG&E’s hydroelectric power generation system as a Construction Engineer for several years before moving to Los Angeles and becoming an active board member in SPE’s Los Angeles Basin Section. There, he regularly hosts young professional happy hours and other networking events.

Ian has extensive experience in major utility driven projects and is proud to continue to work on, and improve, the country’s infrastructure. Ian’s personal interests include exercise, hunting, sports, surfing, and spending time with people he loves.
Nominator Statement

Ian for the past few years has been an outstanding contributor to the SPE and to the community. Here are some examples of his work during the last few years:

1. Board member of the Los Angeles Basin SPE.
2. Leads the LA Basin SPE Young Professional program.
3. Has assisted with the charity golf tournament.
4. Has worked with the University of Southern California SPE chapter.
5. Has volunteered for various community activities.

Ian has made considerable contributions to the SPE early in his career.

He is well-deserving of being honored for this year's Young Professional Service award.
Originally from Alaska, Sydney attended the University of Alaska Fairbanks for Petroleum Engineering. While at university, she held the position of SPE Student Chapter President for two years and the chapter was awarded the Gold Standard in 2018. In addition to her work with SPE, she held a position on the board of directors for the Alaska Miners Association, Governor Walker’s Young Leaders Dialogue on Climate Change, the University Strategic Planning Committee, and received the award of Petroleum Engineering Student of the Year in 2019. After graduating in 2019, Sydney joined ConocoPhillips Alaska Wells and is currently in the Polaris - Wells Support Center as a Drilling Operations Engineer.

Sydney held the position of SPE Alaska Section Membership Chair from 2020-2021 and is the chair of the 2021 SPE Alaska Golf Tournament. She is also an active volunteer with Alaska Resource Education.
Nominator Statement

Sydney Deering is very new to the oil and gas industry but she embodies the SPE mission of To collect, disseminate, and exchange technical knowledge concerning the exploration, development and production of oil and gas resources and related technologies for the public benefit; and to provide opportunities for professionals to enhance their technical and professional competence, Both with her time at the university and currently in her career.
Currently President of Thomas N. Berry & Company and Oil & Gas Mineral Owner, in Hampton Family Investments, LLC, both in Oklahoma. Tom has successful career history in reservoir engineering, brownfield re-development, green field development, reservoir management in waterfloods, steamfloods, gas injection pressure maintenance, and chemical floods.

Tom has had extensive SPE volunteer service from his time as a student at University of Oklahoma to his service on San Joaquin Valley Section of SPE. He has served in a variety of positions ranging from outreach, scholarship, membership, program, and chair of board. He has also served as technical chair for 2017 SPE Western Regional Meeting (WRM), 2020 SPE WRM Region Award Chair, and served as co-chair of a technical session in April 2021 SPE WRM. Received 4/2014 WRM Regional Award for Reservoir Characterization. He has authored/co-authored eight SPE papers.

When not glued to a computer, he enjoys being with his family and currently serving locally in Bakersfield a two-year service mission in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
Tom has been a dedicated volunteer at the local SJV SPE chapter over the last 10 years. All that have volunteered with him acknowledge his dedication to the SPE. He was a pleasure to have as a fellow volunteer and to work with him when he was Chair over the 2018/2019 period. He also convinced me to carry on volunteering when I ran into a heavy professional workload, and I am grateful for that.
In 2005, she was hired with Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources, in Cypress, as an Energy Mineral and Resources Engineer. In 2007, she transferred to the California State Lands Commission (Commission), Mineral resources management, as an Energy Mineral Resources Engineer.

In 2010, she was promoted to an Associate Mineral Resources Engineer, and in 2019, she was promoted, with the Commission, as a Senior Mineral Resources Engineer, a supervisory role.

Her current role is to supervise staff in managing the development of oil, gas, solid minerals, and geothermal energy resources on State-owned lands and sovereign lands and ensure that such development does not jeopardize public safety or harm the environment. More recently, she has been more involved in processing renewable energy projects and implementing an environmental justice policy. She appreciates her rewarding career and enjoys new learning, and training experiences.

The Society of Petroleum Engineers, Los Angeles Basin is one of her favorite organization and she has been an active member for over 15 years. Through this organization, she attained many leadership roles. She served on the Board of Directors, Vice Chairperson and Chairperson, and lead various committees. During her chair position, the Los Angeles section won the 2010 President’s Award for Section Excellence and she was presented with the award in Florence, Italy during the annual ATCE. Throughout her career, she has helped plan and attended many of the Western Regional meetings and the ATCEs. She currently involved in the student outreach committee, such as the M.E.S.A day events, F.E.S.A school events, and the LA/Orange County Science Fairs. As a mentor, she also presents many science and career presentations throughout LA/Orange County.
Vanessa Perez performed every board position & committee in our LA Basin Section since 2007, most years in multiple positions. As Section Chair in 2009-10, we earned the SPE Presidents Section Excellence Award. Regionally, she was awarded the Young Member Outstanding Service Award and was the 2010 WRM YP Chair & 2018 WRM Exhibits Chair. For 10+ years, she was SPE chair of LA & Orange County, Long Beach & CA State Science Fairs, and gave many talks to grade 7-12 students on Engineering careers.
Chris has worked with both of the northwest sections of AAPG and SPE in the past 3 years to bring resources and networking opportunities to both organizations by encouraging collaboration of the professionals between these two organizations. He is the owner of Puget Sound Geological Investigation, where they carry out analysis and simulation for discrete fracture reservoirs. He was a Geologist in Golder’s FracMan Technology Group in Redmond, WA from 2009 until 2016 when he started his own company. He graduated from Michigan State University with a Masters in Geoscience in 2009. Chris graduated from Central Michigan University with my B.S. in Geology in 2006.
Chris May has served the SPE in leadership positions in the Pacific Northwest Section for nearly 10 years, and has been responsible for a number of successful initiatives (student outreach in Washington; founding a student chapter in Vancouver; organizing symposia for the community; integrating programs and efforts with other energy-related societies in the Northwest) that have benefitted the public community, the petroleum engineering profession, and SPE.
Distinguished Corporate Support Award
Black Gold Pump and Supply has been a long time supporter of the SPE and the oil industry. Black Gold has always supported SPE events. They are a consistent sponsor of the Los Angeles Basin SPE Annual Charity Golf Tournament. Black Gold sponsors booths at the SPE Western Regional Meetings. Whenever there's an event, Black Gold is there. Besides all that, Black Gold has found solutions to oil production problems for nearly 40 years. They have developed innovative ways to produce the most complex wells. All in all Black Gold has contributed to the SPE and the oil industry in so many ways. They are truly deserving of this year's SPE Western Regional Distinguished Corporate Support Award.
Congratulations to all of this year's winners!

If you would like to participate in next year’s awards, you can find out more information about the SPE awards at https://www.spe.org/awards/.