

# Fort Worth Business Press

## Energy group keeps industry's young engaged, informed

**BY ROBERT FRANCIS**

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For Matt Thompson, head of the Fort Worth branch of Young Professionals in Energy group, he has no better example of how the organization can help a person in their career than himself.

“I’ve barely been in the industry a year and through YPE I’ve met a lot of people that could be key to my future,” he said. “I know that’s the case with other members as well.”

Thompson is an account manager with Exterran Holdings Inc., a Houston-based company that provides natural gas equipment and services to energy firms.

The Young Professionals in Energy organization is a nonprofit energy industry networking organization based in Houston with 20 chapters and more than 10,000 members worldwide. Locally, the organization has several hundred members, though Thompson said meeting attendance can vary widely.

Networking is a key part of the YPE mission and Thompson said he’s seen plenty of people make connections that might prove useful.

“This is a big industry and now there are a lot of jobs not just here, but elsewhere in the country,” he said.

Thompson said the YPE is not just interested in people directly involved in the energy industry.

“We have a pretty broad base, including engineers, geoscientists, landmen, financial analysts, accountants, attorneys, bankers and others who are also involved in the industry in one way or another,” he said.

The organization typically has breakfast meetings, happy hours and hosts several fundraisers for organizations, such as Big Brothers Big Sisters of North Texas. Thompson is currently planning the local organization’s first golf tournament.

Since taking charge of the local group, Thompson has landed several industry heavyweights such as State Sen. Wendy Davis and Quicksilver Resources Chairman Thomas Darden for

YPE events.

“It was great to see Toby [Thomas] Darden just stand around and answer questions with our members,” Thompson said. “It’s a great opportunity for them.”

For Ken Morgan, director of the TCU Energy Institute, organizations like YPE are a key resource for his students.

“Being in the teaching game, I realize that the future of the energy business, especially with the industry currently being top heavy with people nearing retirement age, is about young people and the next generation,” he said.

A study by management consultants Booz Allen Hamilton from 2008 noted that despite being in a period of rapid expansion, “the global oil and gas industry is already being held back by its failure to attract, recruit and retain highly skilled staff. This is true from rig workers to senior scientists and engineers. Through short-term thinking and a belief that required staff can be bought, the oil and gas industry has stretched its resource base to breaking point.”

Morgan said organizations like YPE can help bridge that employment gap.

“With YPE, I think we see a common linkage about the energy business as a whole and all the different current opportunities and future opportunities for young people,” he said.

Morgan said he has about 250 students who have minored in energy at the school and that YPE’s broad and diverse membership is a good fit with those students.

“I’ve encouraged our TCU students to get involved as they start looking at jobs and careers in the industry no matter what their background,” he said. “The industry needs people with a wide variety of backgrounds and talent.”

Thompson said his organization is well aware of that employment gap.

“I think YPE can help a lot, because we need to learn all we can from those in the industry now so that we’ll be ready when the time comes,” he said.

Young Professionals in Energy

[www.ypenenergy.org](http://www.ypenenergy.org)

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