



AAPG Foundation

American Association of Petroleum Geologists Foundation

WINTER 2026 NEWSLETTER

Non-Profit Org
U.S. Postage
Paid
Tulsa, Oklahoma
Permit No. 979

AAPG
125 W. 15th St.
Tulsa, OK 74119

Building a Better **FOUNDATION** for the **GEOSCIENCES**

Greetings, friends

Welcome back my friends to the show that never ends ...

It's true. Your AAPG Foundation has been continuously working in support of our profession and petroleum geology for nearly 60 years – and it seems like we've just kicked our efforts into overdrive!

In our previous TA newsletter, I “teased” that we would be having some big news coming your way, very soon.

Well, get ready for the delivery!

This Winter TA Newsletter is filled with amazing and even historic news about how this year could be one of the biggest in our history.

Perhaps some of you already have heard about our plans; for others, this may be the first time you're getting the news.

(You can read all about it in both the January and February EXPLORER.)

But either way, my message is that the Foundation is bursting with energy, new ideas and fantastic projects that promise to impact our profession – and maybe far beyond it.

Of course, all of what we've done and are about to do is happening only because of your ongoing, dedicated support of the Foundation.



Jim McGray

Letter continues inside

Shhh! But this is a big deal ...



AAPG Foundation Capital Campaign with a \$25 million goal

Invest in the Future of Geoscience.

The biggest news we're sharing with you, of course, is that we've started a **major capital campaign**. This year – in support of our profession, geoscience education and our place in the world – we seek to raise \$25 million.

This is our first capital campaign in more than 15 years.

Officially, we're still in the campaign's "quiet phase," but we're quickly drawing near to being very loud (and proud!) of our aspirations.

Why a capital campaign? We want to provide immediate support to strengthen geoscience research, geoscience education and talent development for years to come. And, as always, we'll need your support and commitment to reach our target.

Yes, this is an ambitious goal – but it's

something that we've been studying and planning for years.

Why are we doing it now? Because geoscience is at a critical point – university programs are contracting, research funding is diminishing and the academic pipeline that once reliably prepared new explorers is under real strain. At a time when society needs more innovation in energy, environment and subsurface science, fewer students are entering the field and fewer resources exist to support them.

In other words, there is an urgency caused by external factors, and we seek to respond.

Therefore, our capital campaign is designed to provide specific funding for this challenge. *It's our first capital campaign in more than 15 years, and make no mistake, today we can make a difference.*

For us, our **Era of Impact** is about to kick into high gear.

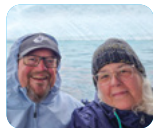
Some background.

Strategies and details for our campaign have been considered unofficially for several years. In fact, current Foundation executive director Rick Fritz first suggested the need for a capital campaign when he was president of AAPG (2020-21).

Rick continued to study and analyze the plan's development – first as a consultant and now in his leadership position – and with others have identified needs, formulated a process, defined specific improvements to our existing programs and created new, *innovative ideas to make our goals not just possible but reachable.*

Leadership matters:

The Capital Campaign Committee is headed by some familiar and highly respected names to our TA family – the co-chairs are **Pam and Dan Billman**, both with Billman Geologic Consultants in Houston, Pa.



As you know, Pam has been a member of the Foundation Trustee Associates since 2017. Dan is a Foundation Member of the Corporation; secretary-treasurer of the TAs; a member of the AAPG House of Delegates

for more than 20 years; and former president of the AAPG Eastern Section (2007-08).

They're already joined by two more members of the TA family: **Jim and Sherree Funk**, who have agreed to serve as the associate chairs. Formerly of Houston, the Funks now reside in New Orleans.

More coming! An entire campaign leadership team is being finalized as I type this note – we'll have those names for you very soon.

You can be sure the team will include those who are not only committed and loyal to the Foundation, but to the entire future of geosciences.

Additional committee members, leadership and campaign details will be announced in coming weeks.

Keep watching for them in the upcoming AAPG EXPLORER.

Something new!

You'll also be reading a lot more in the upcoming EXPLORERs about the **improvements** we're making to existing programs AND the **innovative new ideas** that are being born.

Included in our "innovations" heading is something that we're VERY excited about: The new fund for **Advanced Energy**

Geoscience Innovation & Support – or, as we call it, **AEGIS**.

This initiative was **conceived and developed over the past year to address a critical gap facing the profession** – the erosion of applied research capacity and funding at U.S. universities, just as the energy industry is confronting increasingly complex subsurface challenges.

Approved as a pilot project by the **Foundation Trustees**, AEGIS was created by a small steering committee of Trustee Associates, chaired by Trustee **Scott Camereon**. Committee members include **Steve Sonnenberg, Lee Billingsley, Jim Funk, Bill Morgan, Tom Ewing and Tom Chidsey**, supported by consultant **David Curtiss** and the AAPG Foundation staff.

Through AEGIS, the Foundation will fund graduate-level research projects that:

- ▶ Focus on real-world challenges and problems.
- ▶ Foster stronger ties between industry and academia.
- ▶ Expose students to the practical skills and insights that define successful careers in energy geoscience.

Hot Off the Press: The AEGIS “pilot phase” has just ended, and the initial results were spectacular: We received more

than two dozen proposals, far more than expected for a program debut.

Judging and assessment of the proposals are nearly complete, and very shortly we’ll be able to announce **eight winning proposals**, all of which will receive **\$100,000 grants**, paid over two years, to advance research in areas such as resource exploration, advance reservoir characterization, enhanced oil recovery, sustainable energy development, or environmental topics related to oil and gas production.

Watch your March **EXPLORER** for a full list of the AEGIS recipients as well as more details about the program.

And when you read the names, remember: This is your Foundation at work, helping to improve and secure the future of our profession.



For the record.

Speaking of your Foundation at work ... our **AAPG Foundation Annual Report** is now ready, thanks to the hard-working efforts of our Foundation staff and team volunteers, and will be delivered to your inboxes and mailboxes soon.



It's an easy way to get a quick view of the impressive achievements that we were able to accomplish last year – thanks to your gifts and dedicated support of our efforts.

How big – and effective – was 2025 for the AAPG Foundation?

Here's a partial snapshot of the year that was:

- ▶ **Grants-in-Aid:** \$248,125 in total grants awarded to 97 recipients.
- ▶ **Foundation Field Camp Scholarship program:** \$87,000 awarded to 29 recipients.
- ▶ **Military Veterans Scholarship Program:** \$15,000 awarded to three recipients.
- ▶ **Teacher of the Year and Inspirational Geoscience Educator awards:** \$6,000 award each to two recipients.
- ▶ **YMCA of Greater Houston** (on behalf of **Camp Cullen**): \$35,000. (A geoscience summer specialty camp for children ages

9-16 focusing on geology, earth science, ecology and astronomy – including geology tours.)

- ▶ **Geoscientists without Borders** (partnership with SEG): \$60,000. (Geoscientists sharing their knowledge and skills in communities that are facing environmental hardships or natural hazards.)
- ▶ **Scouting America 2026 Jamboree/Geology Merit Badge Program:** \$33,340. (Development of activities and challenges to help Scouts achieve an understanding of earth's geology.)
- ▶ **Friends of Dinosaur Ridge:** \$50,000. (To assist in the creation of the Deep Time Detour Exhibit, which will allow visitors to explore the area's fossil-rich landscape; set to open May 2026).
- ▶ **AGI Earth Science Week:** \$30,000. (A global movement linking geoscience to daily lives by providing educational activities, resources and events to students.)
- ▶ **West Texas Geological Society/100-Years Anniversary Core Workshop:** \$25,000. (Coming for 2026 – a celebration of the Permian Basin history and core samples from some of the basin's earliest wells.)

- ▶ **GSA Connects 2025/Junior Geologist Program:** \$10,000. (Designed to introduce young minds to geology.)

- ▶ **University of Oklahoma Research Symposium and Expo:** \$10,000.

- ▶ **Switch Energy Alliance:** The Switch Competition 2025: \$5,000. (An annual international case competition for university students to develop solutions for real-world energy challenges.)

- ▶ **Geoscience Educational Opportunity-Research Experience (GEO-Rex):** \$3,000. (Introduces high school students to geology, geophysics and environmental geosciences, with an eye toward pursuing careers.)

- ▶ **Buffalo Bayou Educators' Program:** \$935. (Provides K-12 teachers with a field seminar focused on understanding the flow archives of Hurricane Harvey in Buffalo Bayou, and the impact of flooding events on the geology and the people of the Houston area.)

In other words, thousands and thousands were impacted by Foundation funding – all possible because of gifts to the Foundation.

On their behalf and with our sincere gratitude – Thank you!

Don't miss the trip!

Online registration is now open for a **TA annual meeting** that will be held in one of the world's most beautiful and exciting locations.

The TAs will meet June 7-10 in **Banff, Canada**, at the renowned **Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel** – right in the heart of the Canadian Rockies, and surrounded by both magnificent geology and some of the earth's most breathtaking views.

In addition to the business updates and Foundation discussions that are always held at the TA annual meeting, TA chair **Marty Hewitt** has [amazing field trip agendas](#) already planned, including visits to Canmore, Mount Norquay, Castle Mountain, Moraine Lake and the area's centerpiece, Lake Louise.

There also will be plenty of opportunities to take advantage of the surroundings – golf,

hiking, strolling the charming streets of Banff, relaxation and plenty of receptions.

To register and/or get more details, visit the website at foundation.aapg.org/Trustee-Associates/Annual-Meetings – and plan now to join us there.

REGISTER NOW



Big news for the TAs

Speaking of TAs ... we want to extend a warm welcome to five more wonderful people who have become Trustee Associates since we last talked. They are:

- ▶ **Kent A. Bowker**, Irving, Texas.
- ▶ **Cathy Farmer**, Houston.
- ▶ **Kenneth W. Mohn**, Houston.
- ▶ **Susan S. Nash**, Tulsa.
- ▶ **Wolfgang E. Scholinberger**, Potomac, Md.

Others are in the process of joining the TAs; stay tuned for the updates in our next newsletter.



... adding to the Trustee Associates

In memoriam

Finally, we received some sad news last fall that we want to share:



William J. "Bill" Barrett, a legendary, award-winning petroleum geologist, company-builder and longtime supporter and leader of the

AAPG Foundation, died Sept. 16 at his home in Denver. He was 96.

Barrett was considered one of the profession's top explorationists throughout his 50-plus-year career – a reputation that was frequently recognized and honored, including his inclusion as an AAPG GeoLegend.

An AAPG Honorary Member, Barrett joined AAPG in 1961 and eventually became an integral part of the AAPG Foundation, including roles as:

- ▶ A Trustee Associates member (joined in 2002).
- ▶ A member of the Foundation Financial Campaign Committee (2005-11).
- ▶ A member of the Foundation Legacy Society since 2011.
- ▶ A Foundation Member of the Corporation, starting in 2006.
- ▶ A Foundation Trustee (2007-11).
- ▶ A Trustee Emeritus since 2011.

Appropriately, Barrett received the [L. Austin Weeks Memorial Medal](#) in 2011, the AAPG Foundation's highest honor. He also received AAPG's [Norman H. Foster Outstanding Explorer Award](#) in 2003, and in 2009 was named one of AAPG's "100 Who Made a Difference."

His contributions as a petroleum geologist made headlines far beyond the profession and industry. Barrett, and companies under his leadership, found and developed 10 giant or near-giant size oil and gas fields – and a number of smaller fields – mainly throughout the Rocky Mountain region.

He celebrated his 90th birthday by writing his memoir, "Bill Barrett: Rocky Mountain Wildcatter."

His GeoLegend video interview can be found on the AAPG website.

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW VIDEO](#)

Greetings, friends (*continued*)

Clearly, the AAPG Foundation IS a show that never ends – and as lengthy as this newsletter is, please know that this is but a partial list of what your leadership, volunteers and Foundation team have been doing.

I encourage you to follow our monthly updates in each AAPG EXPLORER magazine, for at least two good reasons:

- ▶ You'll [stay informed](#) on our business, activities and progress throughout the year – especially regarding the capital campaign.
- ▶ By staying connected, you're sure to find ways that [you can be part of our efforts](#) – with your gifts, with your time, with your ideas and opinions.

We can't exist without you.

To close, I want to thank all of you, our loyal TAs and friends of the Foundation, for your continued support, encouragement

and ideas. We are "Building a Better Foundation for the Geosciences," and we can do them only through your generosity.

And even though complete details are yet to be announced, you can start your support of our capital campaign today, by [clicking here](#) or contacting any member of the Foundation staff.

Each day, with each project, we reaffirm the enduring importance of the geosciences and invest today in the discoveries, innovations and people who will carry this field forward.

[We are making a difference in the world – and we're honored to be doing it with you.](#)

Until next time ...

Jim