

Recession, restrictions hamper Wyoming gas industry

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CHEYENNE - The recession and drilling restrictions are taking a toll on Wyoming's coal-bed methane industry.

The Wyoming Oil and Gas Conservation Commission reports that the number of CBM drilling rigs in the state has dropped to zero at times this year for the first time since it began tracking them nearly 10 years ago.

Commission Supervisor Thomas Doll says the agency is seeing fewer applications for drilling permits and more wells being shut in.

Bruce Hinchey of the Petroleum Association of Wyoming says operators are being hit by low prices and government-imposed restrictions on drilling.

However, Doll says drilling for conventional natural gas in the Jonah and Pinedale Anticline fields of southwest Wyoming is still occurring and few companies have gone out of business.