

## TIPRO: Energy output hit records

Texas leads in oil, natural gas production and industry employment, report says

By Mella McEwen  
OIL EDITOR

Despite a year of unique challenges, the nation's oil and gas industry made significant economic contributions in 2025.

The Texas Independent Producers and Royalty Owners Association has released the 11th

edition of its State of Energy Report, finding U.S. crude oil production averaged a record 13.6 million barrels per day in 2025. Further, U.S. natural gas production in 2025 averaged a record 107.7 billion cubic feet per day.

According to TIPRO, the industry supported 2,043,859 di-

rect jobs in the U.S. last year, with total direct and indirect jobs tied to the industry reaching more than 19 million.

Texas continued to lead the nation in both energy production and industry employment, according to TIPRO. The Lone Star State supplied a record 2.1 billion barrels of oil in 2025 and a record 13.5 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. The industry supported a total of 476,777 direct jobs in Texas in 2025, with total

direct and indirect employment of 2.5 million. Texas energy workers accounted for 23% of all oil and gas jobs in the nation.

"I anticipated a notable decline in upstream employment for 2025 and for oil production to taper off in the fourth quarter. We lost an estimated 4,500 upstream jobs compared to 2024, which is significant, but oil and natural gas production once again broke new records. Record natural gas output was an-

tipated, and oil production was attributed to continued efficiency gains, enabling higher output with fewer resources amid lower WTI prices, combined with sustained global and domestic demand," Ed Longenecker, TIPRO president, told the Reporter-Telegram.

Geopolitical tensions around the world continued to be a prevalent issue with conflicts in the Middle East and Ukraine  
*Energy continues on A4*



Paasch Photograph/ISTockphoto

Maps still show barriers in Big Bend Ranch State Park, which some say would be just as destructive as the scrapped proposal for a physical border wall in Big Bend National Park.

## CBP scraps border wall at Big Bend after outcry

Residents, officials from local counties quick to voice opposition

By B. Kay Richter  
STAFF WRITER

BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK — Federal officials with U.S. Customs and Border Protection have reversed course on plans for a physical border wall through Big Bend National Park.

In late February, CBP announced that the Border Patrol planned to construct a "Smart Wall," which would include a steel bollard wall or waterborne barrier along with roads, detection technology, cameras and lighting.

"The Smart Wall provides the Border Patrol with both the impedance and denial, domain awareness, and the access and mobility required to secure the border," said CBP's website when describing the smart wall.

Following the announcement of the Smart Wall, local residents and officials from surrounding counties were quick to voice their opposition. Officials in Brewster County — home to Big Bend National Park — are scheduled to vote Tuesday on a resolution opposing the construction of a physical wall in the Big Bend area. On

Wednesday, Presidio County officials also have a similar item on their Commissioners' Court agenda, which shows a discussion with action to pass a resolution against a physical border wall in Presidio County.

Bob Krumenaker, the former superintendent of the national park and spokesperson for the group Keep Big Bend Wild, said while CBP's Smart Wall map did show changes online, other key issues remained.

"Yesterday, CBP quietly, with no public announcement, made a change to their on-

*Big Bend continues on A8*

## Nation unexpectedly sheds 92,000 jobs; jobless rate at 4.4%

By Crystal Huggins  
STAFF WRITER

U.S. employers cut 92,000 jobs in February while the unemployment rate changed little at 4.4%, according to the latest Employment Situation report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor.

The job losses pushed total unemployment to about 7.6 million people, the agency reported.

The decline in payrolls was driven in part by job losses in health care, information and government.

Health care employment fell by about 28,000 jobs during the month.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics said the decline reflected strike activity affecting physicians' offices, although hospital employment increased slightly.

Employment also continued  
*Jobless continues on A4*



The Good Brigade/Getty Images

The labor force participation rate held at 62% in February.

## Home project could see zone change

Objections to city involve flood fears, easement access

By Luke Dias  
STAFF WRITER

The 385-lot residential development project planned by Mark Payne, a local home developer, is seeking a zone change to allow for different mixed-uses on the property.

The land is currently zoned for three different kinds of districts: Single-Family, Planned Development and Agricultural Estate. Payne's request is to keep the Single-Family zoning, but replace the other two with Local Retail zoning. This would change what businesses would be allowed on the land.

City staff received two objections.

The reasons given were flood concerns, easement access and an overall disapproval of the specific zone change.

"The current flood zone, I think, is wrong," said Davis Hord, a Midlander who lives south of the land. "We've been out there during storms, and the water doesn't go where the flood zone says it does. It all goes to A Street and comes down, and I'm concerned that it would overflow the Saddle Club lake reservoir."

In response to Hord's comments, city staff said that such precautions are done during the platting process instead of zoning and that they had evaluated flood concerns during the preliminary plat process. Hord has been invited to restate his concerns when the final plat process begins.

"There are some drainage issues there, but we're putting a very substantial retention and detention basin, which will do nothing but improve the condition," Payne said in response to Hord's concerns. "But there are some issues that the city will need to address at some point in time, as you never see (the worst case scenario). We've certainly done a thorough study to make sure we're addressing the runoff we're creating."

In addition, the objection about easements came from a woman named Patty McDonald who also lives south of the property.

Per the objection, McDonald claims that the development would hinder a route she takes to get hay for her property.

"This is the (50-foot) easement that the city of Midland currently owns that runs east-and-west just north of my prop-

*Project continues on A4*





John Ruberry/Getty Images

Bob Krumenaker, spokesperson for the group Keep Big Bend Wild, said while CBP's Smart Wall map did show changes online, other key issues remain.

## BIG BEND

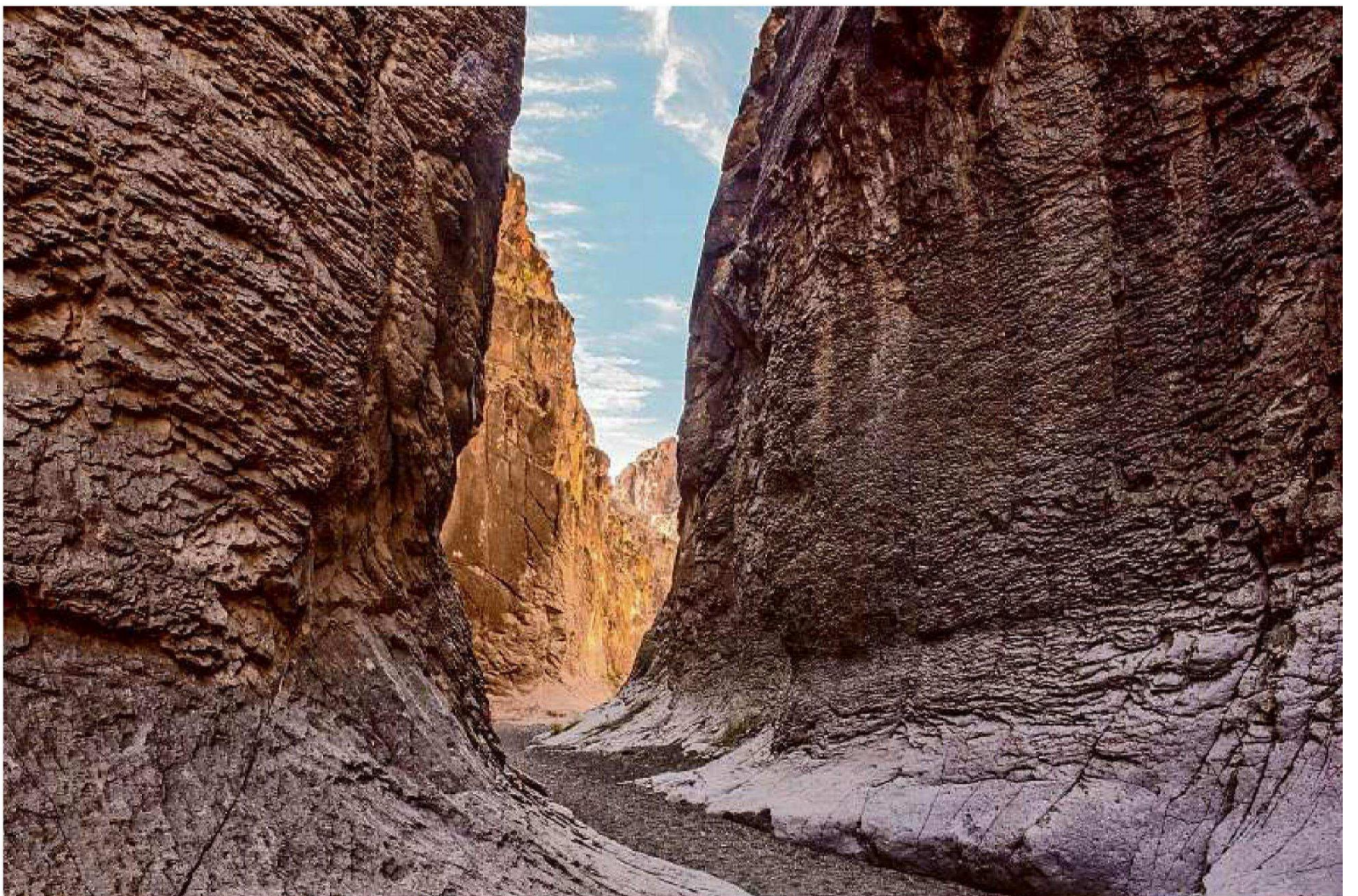
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line map indicating that there is no longer a physical wall planned for Big Bend National Park and Rio Grande Wild & Scenic River immediately downstream," he wrote. "If this is a true reflection of their intent, Keep Big Bend Wild, and the many allied groups and citizens of Texas and the rest of the country that have been actively opposing this, would be delighted."

Krumenaker went on to describe that the Smart Wall map still showed a wall in much of Big Bend Ranch State Park, which he said is just as destructive as the proposal in the national park.

"We remain concerned and vigilant and would like to see a clear public announcement from CBP of their intent and a commitment that it won't change again, before we will assume this is over," he said. "We support a secure border, but a wall through the Big Bend would be unnecessary and highly destructive, as the number of people who cross has long been extremely low. The remarkable public outcry over the proposed wall here, though, has been a testament to the passion Texans have for Big Bend, and the need for all of us to work together to assure its permanent protection."

According to the Texas Parks and Wildlife web-



Tim Speer/iStockphoto

According to the Texas Parks and Wildlife website, Big Bend Ranch State Park has 238 miles of multiuse trails.

site, Big Bend Ranch State Park has 238 miles of multiuse trails used for hiking, biking and equestrian access. The park boasts 70 miles of dirt roads for four-wheel-drive vehicles, as well as promoting access to the Rio Grande, also known as the Rio Bravo, for day use. Park guests

can also float, fish, hike or even drive the scenic Camino del Rio located at Farm-to-Market Road 170. Camino del Rio, or River Road, is nestled between Lajitas and Presidio.

"For over 30 miles, El Camino twists and winds with the Rio Grande, crossing arroyos, climbing

mountains, and hugging canyon walls," TPWD said. "The 'Big Hill' has one of the steepest grades on a highway in Texas, and at the top, the view looks east to the Chisos Mountains 75 miles, and west into Colorado Canyon and mountain ranges deep into Mexico."

Most tourist sites say the view includes stunning scenery, such as a steep and winding section through mountains and along the Rio Grande and must-see spots such as the Closed Canyon trail and the Hoodoos Trailhead. Visitors describe the experience as "surreal, majestic

and a perfect mix of desert vistas and river scenery."

According to government officials from CBP within the Big Bend sector, a statement regarding the Smart Wall was being prepared. However, as of press time, no official statement had been distributed.

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