



# COGA



## Three Decades in Oil & Gas: As told from a Colorado Industry Entrepreneur

### Conversation with Bruce White

Senior Vice President High Sierra Water Services

*COGA is pleased to share our Q&A with Bruce White, Sr. Vice President of High Sierra Water Services. A 4th generation Ault native, Bruce got his first taste of the oil and gas industry in the early 80's as an investor where he learned about the many different aspects of the business. He must have liked what he saw because in 1984 Bruce raised enough money from family and friends for his first well which was the beginning of Conquest Oil Company. A pioneer in water recycling and reclamation, Bruce and his partner, Dale Butcher, formed Conquest*

*Water Services in 1993 which was recently sold to High Sierra Energy. With over three decades of experience to draw upon, listening to Bruce is a little like getting a Ph.D in the Colorado O&G industry...without having to go to class! We hope you enjoy Bruce's Q&A where you'll learn why he decided to install a natural gas line in his garage 15 years ago and what he considers to be the three most important life lessons he's learned about business.*

### COGA: Let's start at the beginning. How long have you been in the oil and gas business and how did you get started?

I first got into the business in the early 80's as an investor. Back then a number of operators in the DJ were offering Limited Partnerships in wells they were drilling and my father and I began investing in some of them. As an investor, I got to see all parts of the operation and became more and more interested in the industry. In 1984, I raised enough money from family and friends for my first well, which was the beginning of Conquest Oil Company.

### COGA: Congratulations on the recent sale of Conquest Water Services to High Sierra. It sounds like a good fit for both companies. What's next for Bruce White?

My partner, Dale Butcher, and I both felt that High Sierra was the right company at the right time. We'd had a few other offers over the last few years but for one reason or another, they didn't feel quite right. Over time, we became more and more interested in water recycling and the more involved in it we became, the more we felt it was the future of our company. High Sierra had both the technology and the resources to take Conquest Water Services to the next level. Both Dale and I plan to stay involved with High Sierra.

### COGA: Conquest was always active in the communities in which it lived and did business. Why is that important?

Giving back, at whatever level you can, has always been important to me. It may come from my small town upbringing (I grew up in Ault—my family is 4th generation) and the sense of community pride that I grew up with. Wherever it comes from, I believe it's important for businesses to be active in the communities in which they live and do business.





## **COGA: Is it true that you were one of the first presidents and organizers of COGA? Tell us how that happened.**

Before there was a COGA, there was the DJPA (Denver Julesburg Petroleum Association) and I was one of its first presidents. As DJPA evolved, it was decided that it needed a name change to better represent and reflect its membership. That was the beginning of COGA. I'm pleased with the direction COGA has taken since those early days and look forward to helping it in the future.

## **COGA: What's the hardest part of being an entrepreneur in the oil and gas industry?**

Dealing with ever-changing regulatory issues have always been a challenge but that's part of doing business in this industry. Dealing with the ups and downs of commodity-driven prices can be interesting as well. But I'm not complaining—there are challenges of doing business in every industry. One thing I can tell you: I've always enjoyed going to work in the morning and that, to me, says a lot about the benefits of being an entrepreneur in this industry.

## **COGA: Rumor has it there's something in your garage that was the catalyst for the NGV Coalition in Greeley—tell us about that.**

It all started 15 years ago, at the first Gas Conference that T Boone Pickens spoke at. After hearing him talk, I got so excited about natural gas and the future of NGV's that I had a natural gas line brought into my garage in the house we were building at the time. That line is still there, capped. Two years ago, when Pickens spoke at the Energy Epicenter Conference, he was saying a lot of the same things he said 13 years before that. I got excited all over again. After his talk, I ran into Weld County Commissioner Barbara Kirkmeyer and we started talking about what T Boone had said and how important it was to help move this forward. I also mentioned the 13 year-old untapped natural gas line in my garage. Barbara really "got it". Over the last two years, she helped pull together a group of Weld County producers and NGV businesses to create Weld County Natural Gas Coalition—a public and private sector partnership promoting the use of natural gas as "The" alternative transportation fuel. As a result of its efforts, Weld County will have its first four public CNG fill stations by the summer of 2012.

## **COGA: Listening to you is like getting a Ph.D in the Colorado oil and gas industry. What are the three most important things you've learned about life as a result of your career?**

1. Surround yourself with the smartest people you can.
2. Be honest about yourself—understand your strengths and your weaknesses.
3. When you say you're going to do something, do it.

## **COGA: What do you see as the future of oil and gas in Colorado?**

I'm very excited about the future of the industry in Colorado. I think Colorado Natural Gas will play a big part in helping America achieve its energy independence.





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To show you how fast things are now moving, I recently heard that Ford, Dodge, and GM will be rolling out a line of NGV pick-up trucks in 2012. So, with a little luck, it looks like I might be able to buy a factory-built NGV truck from my local dealership and start using that natural gas line in my garage as well as have my choice of four fill stations in Weld County.

**COGA: Thanks, Bruce. Always a pleasure!**

