

# National Situation Updates

**Thursday, January 25, 2001**

## **Kansas Natural Gas Explosion Update**

Eight natural gas geysers are still venting in Hutchinson, KS since last week's explosion. Gas personnel were able to cap the gas well on Sunday and the plug is holding; however, there were some problems with the plug. Kansas Gas Service indicated they might fill the well with brine in case the plug fails.

As of Monday morning, the mobile home park remained evacuated along with 50 additional homes. One square block downtown was cordoned off as fires continued to burn. The American Red Cross reports one open shelter in Hutchinson this morning housing approximately 38 individuals.

The Kansas National Guard has completed their mission in providing security. Personnel from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment are providing assistance as well as the Kansas Department of Transportation. An agency coordination meeting was held on Monday to discuss response issues. The meeting participants switched emphasis to long-range recovery plans. The Kansas DEM and Reno County emergency management officials are monitoring the situation and are keeping FEMA Region VII informed of any changes. (*FEMA Region VII*)

## **Second Victim Dies From Hutchinson Gas Explosion**

*Victim's Husband Died Earlier This Month*

**WICHITA, Kan., Posted 10:49 p.m. CST January 29, 2001** -- A second victim has died from injuries suffered in a natural gas explosion at a [Hutchinson](#) mobile home park.

Authorities say that 64-year-old Mary Ann Hahn died Monday of smoke inhalation and burns at a Wichita hospital.

Hahn and her husband, 68-year-old John Hahn, were injured earlier this month. He died the next day.

# Gas Geyser Eruptions in Kansas



Photo By Sandra Milburn

**A Hutchinson firefighter rushes toward the Decor Wedding and Party Supplies store, 20 West 1st, Wednesday after a 10:45 a.m. explosion and fire that destroyed the business and an adjacent furniture store.**

## **CARL MANNING**

Associated Press Writer

HUTCHINSON, KS (AP)-- Natural gas geysers erupted across the city's east end, sparking fires, critically injuring a couple in a mobile home park and forcing hundreds of people to flee.

Bright yellow flames, fed by the gas, continued to burn Friday morning downtown, where a blast Wednesday destroyed two businesses, and at the Big Chief Mobile Home Park, where an explosion Thursday prompted evacuations.

"I'm not going to lie to you all. This is a very serious situation," Mayor Patrick McCreary said Thursday.

Experts say the gas is likely coming from a storage facility that may be leaking the gas along the city's water lines here, 60 miles northwest of Wichita. Authorities estimated there are nine blowholes.

Gas was shooting as high as 30 feet above ground caused the mobile home blast.

## Hutchinson Declared Disaster Area

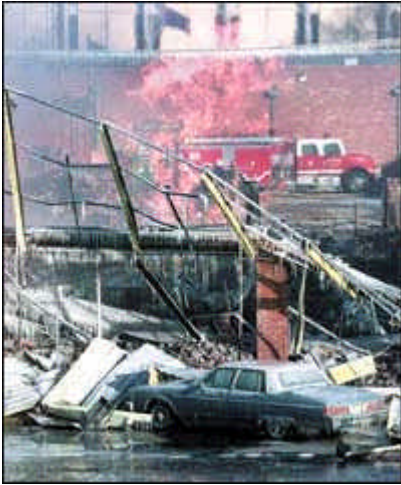


Photo By Debi Roberts

**Flames are seen in the ruins of Decor Party Supplies early Thursday morning. An explosion rocked the building Wednesday morning.**

**JOHN HENDERSON**

Courtesy [The Hutchinson News](#)

Lt. Gov. Gary Sherrer came to Hutchinson Thursday to sign an emergency proclamation declaring the greater Hutchinson area in a state of disaster, thereby authorizing emergency aid from any available state agency. Sherrer said he was impressed by the way Hutchinson has responded to its crises.

"When things like this happen, though you hope they never do happen, you get to see the best side of people," Sherrer told National Guardsmen at the Hutchinson post Thursday evening.

Sherrer got a tour of the city, met a lot of the best people, but saw the worst, including an abandoned mobile home park, ominous geysers of water shooting out of the ground, and the blazing remnants of two businesses. "What I hate about this," Sherrer said, "is I just feel helpless. I want to take my coat off, grab a shovel and go dig for something, or get behind a barricade so some guy can go get a cup of coffee."

## New Mexico Pipeline Explosion Seismic Signals

On Saturday, August 19th 2000 at approximately 5:26:19 am Mountain Daylight Time, a large natural gas pipeline explosion occurred in south-eastern New Mexico near the Pecos River. The approximate location of the explosion is indicated by the star in the figure above. Eleven nearby campers, including five children, were killed by the blast and fire. The ensuing fireball was large enough to be seen in Carlsbad, NM, 20 miles to the north.



The explosion created a large crater shown above (the State Police GPS location is (32.03785,-104.0286)). The crater is 86 feet long, 46 feet wide, and 20 feet deep. The people camped near the pipeline may have been unaware of its exact location because it was buried 15 feet underground, although the pipeline emerged from the ground to cross the Pecos river at a nearby bridge. The cause of the explosion is currently being investigated by El Paso Natural Gas and the National Transportation Safety Board

**Could It Happen Again?**  
**Brenham Explosion Sends Emotional Shock Waves**  
By Allison Seale

Photo of scene <http://www.aerialviewpoint.com/dhof/>

The explosion that rocked the peaceful hills near Brenham on April 7 was felt as far away as Galveston. The emotional shock waves, however, continue to be felt. And, as folks in the Brazos Valley band together in support of the little community of Wesley – a town who had one-third of its population of 60 injured in the disaster – the question raised is: Could this happen again?

As word of the explosion spread, emergency crews and volunteers from as far away as Houston converged on Wesley, a town about seven miles south of Brenham on FM 109 and County Road 19. What they found seemed to defy belief. Tops of trees had been ripped off and branches lay splintered and scorched on pastures that hours before had been green and spotted with wildflowers. Homes had been moved from their foundations and toppled, their contents strewn for hundreds of feet.

## **Jurors Award \$138 Million in Gas Pipeline Blast**

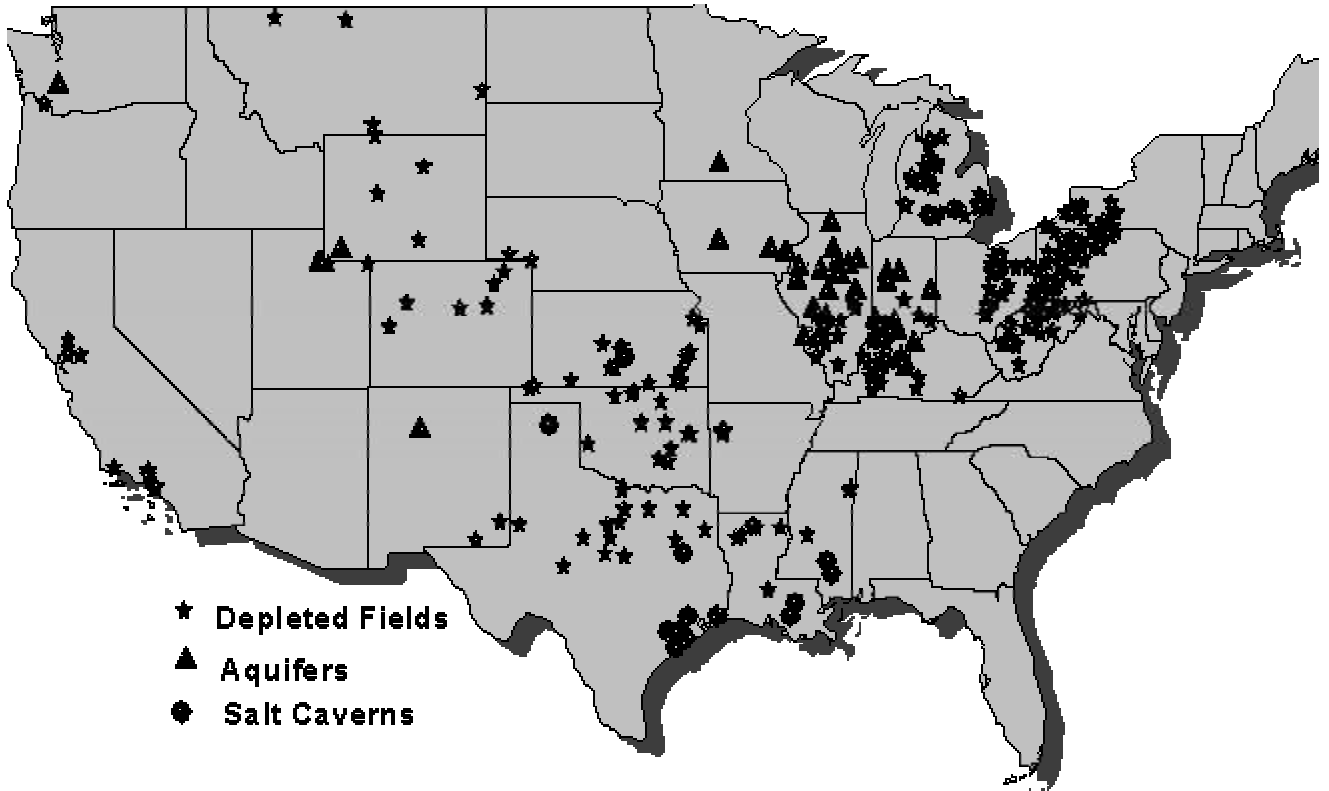
HOUSTON (AP) - Jurors awarded \$138 million in punitive damages Wednesday to 22 residents of a rural area near Brenham whose property was ravaged by a gas pipeline explosion in 1992.

"We argued that the award would have to be at least that high for the industry to get the message," said plaintiffs' attorney Joe Garnett.

The blast killed three people, injured 23 and caused more than \$6.5 million in damage. It was heard up to 100 miles away and sent a gigantic ball of fire rolling through the area.

The state jury ordered three gas and pipeline companies to pay the damages: Seminole Pipeline Co., Mid-American Pipeline Co. and MAPCO Inc. On Monday, the jury awarded the residents \$5.4 million in compensatory damages.

# Underground Natural Gas Storage Facilities in the United States



SOURCE: EIA