



TBPG Fall Newsletter - September 2025

Message from the Board Chair

Colleagues and Stakeholders,

At our August 22, 2025 Quarterly Board Meeting, the Texas Board of Professional Geoscientists (TBPG) voted unanimously to establish a Texas Professional Geoscientist (P.G.) Emeritus status for retiring licensees. We also directed staff to finalize detailed criteria for the program for Board consideration at our November meeting. This is a long-discussed step that honors decades of professional service while maintaining the integrity of licensure in Texas.

Importantly, this Emeritus program was a major initiative of our previous Chair, Becky Johnson, P.G. I'm genuinely excited to have helped get it across the finish line in collaboration with current and former Board members, staff, and many engaged licensees.



W. David Prescott, P.G.
Board Chair, TBPG

Why a P.G. Emeritus Program—and Why I Support It

For many of our colleagues, the P.G. license is more than a credential; it's a professional identity earned through education, experience, and adherence to high standards. When a geoscientist chooses to permanently retire from licensure, it shouldn't require simply "walking away" from that identity.

The P.G. Emeritus program will:

Recognize career service to the people of Texas as a licensed P.G.
Retire the license number with the geoscientist, preserving that legacy and avoiding future

reuse.

Provide a formal, Board-recognized status for those permanently stepping away from licensure, contingent upon meeting program criteria and submitting an application (details forthcoming).

This action reflects years of thoughtful discussion and broad licensee feedback. (And for those wondering: no, “emeritus” does not include a lifetime supply of rock hammers. Recognition, yes; active practice authority, no.)

What Emeritus Is and Is Not?

Is: An honorary, non-practicing recognition for P.G.s who permanently retire from licensure and meet program requirements.

Is: A way to stay connected to TBPG in retirement and preserve your license number as part of your professional legacy.

Is Not: Authorization to practice geoscience or to hold out as a licensed practitioner in Texas. Emeritus is a recognition, not an active license.

Formal criteria, application steps, and timing will be proposed by staff and brought to the Board at our November meeting. Once approved, instructions will be posted on our website.

Distinguished P.G. Program

In tandem with recognizing those who are retiring, the Board also endorsed developing a Distinguished P.G. program to recognize certain active P.G.s who meet the highest standards of licensure and professional practice. Additional details will be considered alongside the Emeritus criteria.

Governance & Service

A new Chair for TBPG is expected to be selected soon. It has been an honor to serve on the Board for the past 12 years and as Chair for the last two-plus years. The work has been challenging, consequential, and deeply rewarding.

I want to challenge every Texas P.G.: consider serving on the Board. Your expertise is invaluable to public protection and to the profession’s future. Board service offers a front-row seat to policy, ethics, and practical problem-solving that strengthens geoscience practice statewide.

On behalf of the Board, thank you to every Texas Professional Geoscientist serving the public through responsible practice. For those approaching retirement, the P.G. Emeritus pathway is our way of saying: your service matters—and it always will.

Respectfully,

W. David Prescott, P.G.

Chair, Texas Board of Professional Geoscientists

CONGRATULATIONS!!

TBPG Compliance Manager Gordon Magenheim, P.G. has been selected as a recipient of a Presidential Certificate of Merit award from the American Institute of Professional Geologists (AIPG)! This award will be presented to Mr.

Magenheim at the Annual AIPG meeting in St. Louis Missouri on October 6th.
TBPG is extremely proud to have Mr. Magenheim as our Compliance
Manager!



Congratulations to TBPG Board Member Mark Varhaug

Mark Varhaug, P.G., C.P.G., who currently serves as TBPG Board Secretary, was recently elected Vice President of the Division of Professional Affairs (DPA) of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists (AAPG). The DPA seeks to advance the careers of AAPG members through subject matter expertise certifications, professional development and networking events, and promoting professionalism, career planning, and ethical standards. DPA membership signals credibility, discipline, and integrity to peers, employers, clients, and regulatory bodies.



His term began August 22, 2018, and he will serve until August 1, 2029.



Below are the Texas and National Summaries of Statistics for the
March 2025 ASBOG Examinations

Texas Results March 2025	Total Number of Candidates	Number of Candidates Passing	Percent of Candidates Passing
FG Exam	96	54	56.3%
PG Exam	51	35	68.6%

NATIONAL FG AND PG EXAMINATION SUMMARY STATISTICS

March 2025	Total Number of Candidates	Number of Candidates Passing	Percent of Candidates Passing
FG Exam	860	588	68.4%
PG Exam	407	309	75.9%

The Fall exam dates are **October 2nd and 3rd, 2025**

The application cutoff for the October exam dates has passed, any deficient files will be moved forward to the March 20 and 21, 2026 exam dates once they are completed.

Currently, candidates can choose from 40+ testing locations across Texas. For a complete list of the current cities with testing sites, please visit Prometric by

[CLICKING HERE](#)

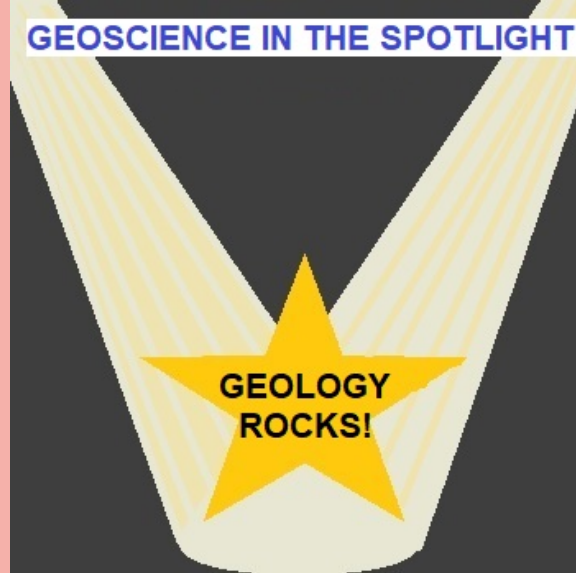
[For more information about applying for an Exam, click here!](#)

[To APPLY online to sit for an Exam, click here!](#)

[ASBOG Examinee Candidate Handbook, click here!](#)

The ASBOG Examinee Candidate Handbook is the official guide to policies and procedures for the ASBOG National Geology Examinations. This guide will provide important information to exam candidates regarding scope; content and development of the licensure exams; a step-by-step guide to register and pay for the computer-based exams and select a testing location; and example practice questions to help prepare for the ASBOG National Geology Examinations. It was updated in January of 2024.

ASBOG's Fundamentals of Geology Prep course is available. This is an immersive, on-demand, and fully online course, meticulously designed to empower candidates for the ASBOG Fundamentals of Geology (FG) exam. For more information, please see ASBOG's website **[HERE!](#)**



**We are pleased to introduce our P.G. In The Spotlight:
Ken Forster, P.G. #6833**

Mr. Forster is employed as an Environmental Geologist at The Center for Toxicology and Environmental Health. He graduated from Wittenberg University (B.A., Geology) and the University of Toledo (M.S., Geology w/Hydrogeology) and is a licensed P.G. in Texas, Arkansas, and Louisiana.



1) When were you first licensed? Why is having a PG license important to you?

I received my Texas P.G. license in August 2003. Even though I was working for the TCEQ at the time, I felt getting a P.G. license was an important part of my career development. As a geologist it helps to provide a path for continued career growth. I feel that a P.G. licensing program is critical to monitoring the environmental and geological consulting industry to ensure honesty and integrity, and it provides checks and balances to hold professionals accountable for their decisions and actions.

2) Why did you pursue a career in Geoscience? What part of Geoscience interested you the most?

My first week of college, I had no idea what I wanted to do. I was assigned a Faculty Advisor from the Geology Department. When he asked me what major I wanted to study, I said I don't know. He replied with, so Geology it is then. The first week-long field trip to

Kentucky convinced me this is where I belong. I was so used to getting yelled at for playing in the mud, now I get paid for it.

As a geologist/hydrogeologist and environmental consultant, I still love the variety of different challenges and unique problems to be solved. I enjoy helping both internal and external clients solve environmental and regulatory problems.

3) What is your favorite part of working as a geoscientist?

My favorite part of working as a geoscientist, is that I get to work on a large variety of challenging projects, and I help solve problems for clients, and every once and a while I get to sleep at night.

4) What are your hopes for the Geoscience industry in Texas?

My main hope is that the Texas Legislature continues to see the benefits of the PG licensing program. It is critical to maintain honesty, integrity, and accountability.

5) Do you have any advice for someone interested in a career in Geoscience?

My advice is to get out there and get your hands dirty, seek out opportunities and challenges that push your abilities, always ask why, and don't be afraid of making a mistake. Learn how to write, learn how to listen, be honest, and wear sunscreen.

6) What do you do in your spare time?

In my spare time, I enjoy spending time with my family and friends, skiing, biking, hiking with our dog, tuning and waxing skis, fixing things around the house, exploring craft breweries in Colorado.

7) What do you think is the single most important thing for the future of Geology or Geosciences in Texas?

Constant education. Always keep learning, whether it be new regulations, scientific methods or just a new innovative idea.



If you are a licensed P.G. or G.I.T. in Texas and would like to be featured for Geoscience in the Spotlight, please contact TBPG at licensing@tbpg.texas.gov for an interview!

Highlights from the August 22, 2025 Board Meeting

Requests For Waivers

The Board reviewed fourteen requests for waivers. The Board approved all fourteen of the requests.

Discussion

Chair W. David Prescott discussed Governor's Appointments and TBPG's Disaster Response to the July 4th flood emergency declaration.

Executive Director Rene D. Truan gave a report on Operations, Staff Updates, Program updates and the Financial Report. Financial Officer Dr. Coretta Briscoe presented the Financial Report.

Committee Chair Mark Varhaug reported on the General Issues Committee's review, research and discussion regarding Emeritus status and Distinguished P.G. Status and Four Year Rule Review.

The Board unanimously approved creation of Emeritus status and endorsed the development of a Distinguished Texas P.G. recognition program.

Compliance Manager Gordon Magenheim provided the Compliance report and a presentation about the ASBOG Fundamentals results from March 2025, and discussed how the results compare to previous examinations.

Compliance Comments

Next Steps After Obtaining Your Texas Professional Geoscientist License

By Gordon Magenheim, P.G.
TBPG Compliance and Outreach Manager

Obtaining your license as a Texas Professional Geoscientist (P.G.) is a significant professional career achievement and is certainly one to be proud of.

Once you've received your P.G. license certificate (and wallet card) from the Texas Board of Professional Geoscientists (TBPG), the next step is to provide TBPG with a copy of your P.G. seal. This is required by **Section §1002.263 (Seal)** of the Texas Geoscience Practice Act (TGPA), a copy of which is available at the TBPG website [HERE](#).

The TGPA requires that new P.G. license holders obtain a seal of a design established by the board containing the license holder's name, license number, the words "Licensed Professional Geoscientists," and license holder's discipline of geoscience (i.e., geology, geophysics, or soil science). This can be accomplished through vendors that are readily available online.

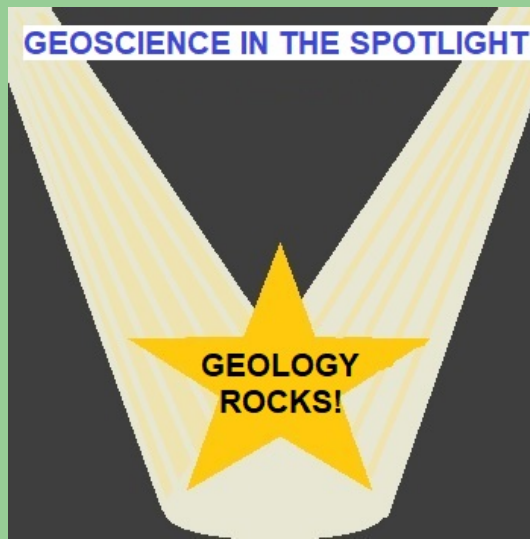
Once you've acquired a Texas P.G. seal, the next step is providing a copy of your seal to the TBPG using TBPG *Form X: P.G. Seal Submission Form* (available using the "Forms" icon at the bottom of the TBPG Homepage or clicking [HERE](#)).

TBPG Rule §851.20(q) (Professional Geoscientist Licensing Requirements and Application Procedure) requires that a completed TBPG *Form X* be submitted within sixty (60) days of notification of licensure (Found [HERE](#)) The completed form may either be submitted by mail or as an email attachment sent to TBPG (mailing and email information is located at the bottom of this form).

Every licensee should be familiar with and follow the specific sealing requirements in **TBPG Rule 851.156 (Professional Geoscientist Seals and Geoscience Firm Identification)** which is available [HERE](#). Completing TBPG *Form X* requires your signature and a date acknowledging that you are familiar with the requirements of **851.156** and the overall usage of your seal.

One last note: all P.G. licensees are required to inform the TBPG within thirty (30) days of any changes in contact information (i.e., address, phone number, or email address) or changes in employer. **TBPG Rule §851.112 (Required Reports to the TBPG)** provides greater detail as to reporting requirements for individual Texas P.G.s as well as TBPG-licensed Geoscience Firms and is available [HERE](#).

If you have any questions regarding your P.G. seal, feel free to contact TBPG staff either by phone (512-936-4408) or by email (compliance@tbpg.texas.gov).



**We are pleased to introduce our G.I.T. In The Spotlight:
Luke Whitenburg, G.I.T., #705**

Mr. Whitenburg is employed as a Geologist at Lhoist North America, Inc. He graduated from Stephen F. Austin State University (B.S., Geology and M.S., Geology) and received his Texas G.I.T. Certification in 2024.



1) Why is having a GIT Certification important to you?

Having this certification aligns me to a group of geoscientists that are dedicated to conducting geologic work in an ethical and standardized manner. I passed my Fundamentals of Geology exam in October 2023 while in graduate school at Stephen F. Austin State University. I plan on sitting for my PG exam in 2026!

2) Why did you pursue a career in Geoscience? What part of Geoscience interested you the most?

I started my college career as a mass communications major. In my second semester I took a Geology 101 class and found that I really enjoyed learning about earth science and rocks, so much that I switched majors to geology in my third semester. I realized that I had a passion for learning about geologic processes, which is great because they are everywhere you look! There is always a problem to solve, always something that makes you think.

3) What is your favorite part of working as a Geoscientist-in-Training?

Field work, being able to work outdoors and see new places is an incredible adventure, from the shelf platforms of Florida to the basins and ranges of Nevada! As a mine geologist, I have the opportunity to travel around the US to visit mines, conduct exploration drilling, and work on geologic studies using new, innovative technologies.

4) What are your hopes for the Geoscience industry in Texas? What would you like to see somewhere in the future?

I hope to see geoscience industry integrate new technologies in the classroom and the jobsite. The advancements in field mapping (drones, LiDAR, GPS) and software improvements (GIS, artificial intelligence, modeling), to name a few, offer opportunities to

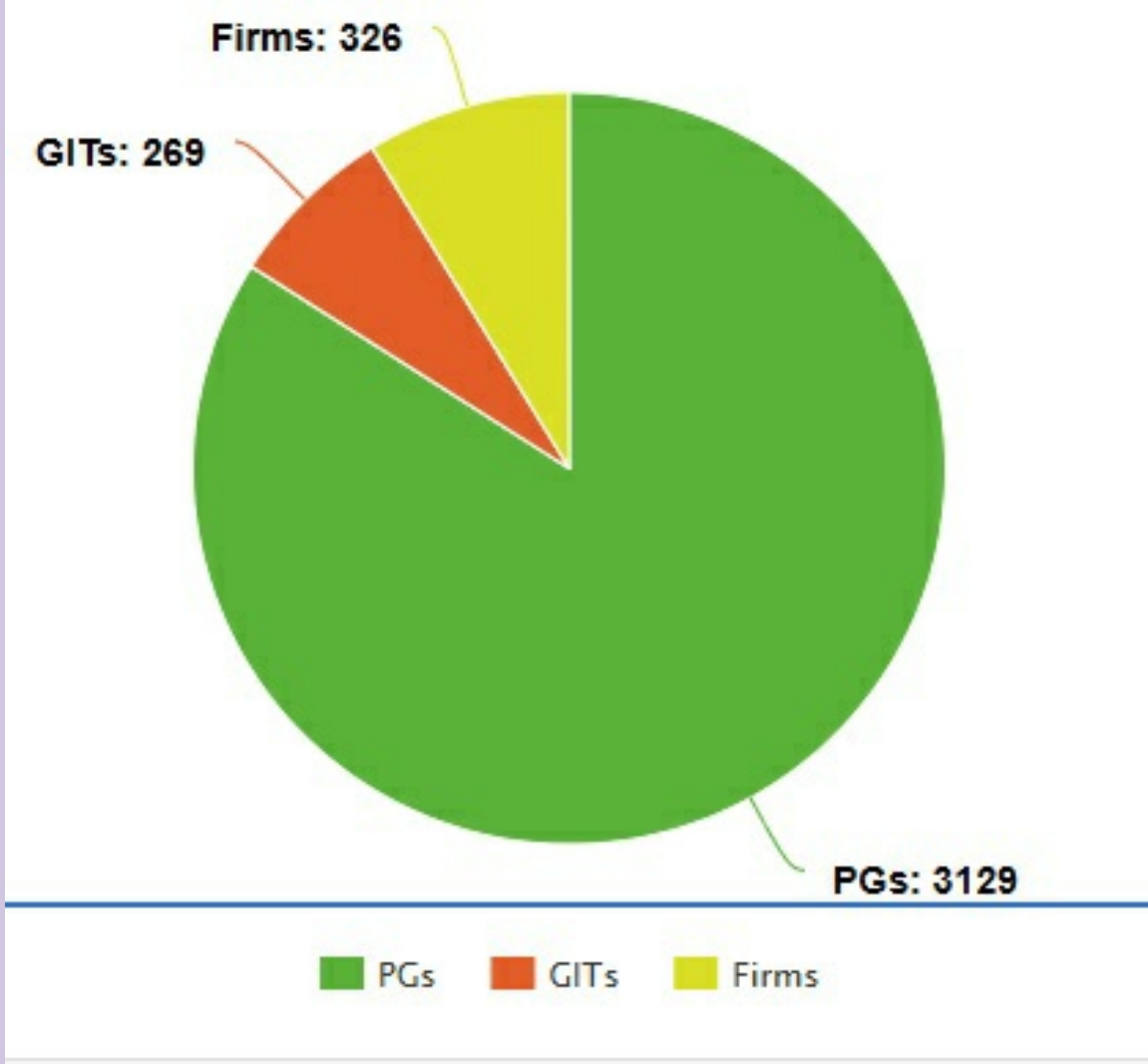
continuously improve our industry.

Anything else you would like us to know?

I graduated Stephen F. Austin State University with a Bachelor of Science in Geology in 2021 and a Master of Science in Geology in 2024. I now live in Fort Worth with my wife and two cats.



CURRENT LICENSES AS OF 09/01/2025



TOTAL LICENSES MANAGED 4,600 - Current and Expired eligible to renew.

PGs	GITs	FIRMS
Current: 3129	Current: 277	Current: 326
Expired: 635	Expired: 205	Expired: 38

Upcoming TBPG Meetings Austin, Texas

August 21, 2025
 Application Review and Continuing Education Committee
 Financial Review Committee
 Compliance and Enforcement Committee
 General Issues Committee

August 22, 2025
 TBPG Board Meeting

These meetings may be available for public comment or participation via Zoom.
Meeting agendas including Zoom links will be available on the TBPG website at least one week prior to the meetings.

Information was missing from the article written by our P.G. In The Spotlight in our last Newsletter and Dr. Owen's answer to one of the questions on our interview was copied incorrectly. TBPG appreciates her bringing this to our attention and giving us a chance to correct it.

Rebecca Owens, PhD, P.G. #15691



4) What are your hopes for the Geoscience industry in Texas?

I hope to see the geoscience industry continue to innovate to meet the needs of our changing world and its inhabitants. The students entering college now have different outlooks, goals and values than those of years past and will bring exciting viewpoints and ideas to the geoscience industry. Rather than writing them off, listen to them! My students teach me things every day.

TBPG's Summer Newsletter with all of Dr. Owen's responses can be viewed on our website [HERE](#)

Agency Contact Information:

SUBJECT	INFORMATION	PHONE/EMAIL
GENERAL	General questions and inquiries, Token Numbers	512-936-4408 LICENSING@TBPG.TEXAS.GOV
COMPLAINTS	File a Complaint, Complaint inquiries	512-936-4410 COMPLIANCE@TBPG.TEXAS.GOV
CONTINUING EDUCATION	CE Program, CE Audits, CE Requirements	512-936-4410 COMPLIANCE@TBPG.TEXAS.GOV
OUTREACH	Outreach Opportunities	512-936-4401 VOLUNTEER@TBPG.TEXAS.GOV
FINANCE	Accounts Payable, Receivables, Purchasing, ITVs	512-936-4404 CORETTA.BRISCOE@TBPG.TEXAS.GOV
LICENSING	New license inquiries, Applications, Examinations, Waivers and Qualifications	512-936-4408 LICENSING@TBPG.TEXAS.GOV

OPEN RECORDS	Open Records or Public Information Requests	512-936-4401 RTRUAN@TBPG.TEXAS.GOV
ONLINE ASSISTANCE	Assistance with the online licensing portal	LICENSINGHELP@HPC.STATE.TX.US



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