

productive wells near your land or no wells are currently being drilled, your mineral rights may not be worth much, perhaps a few dollars per acre. However, if the company you're dealing with has been exploring in the area and believes petroleum is present, it may be worth much more. Of course, the oil company will attempt to keep their ideas secret and lease as much land for as low a price as possible. In areas close to active drilling or significant production, the value of a lease may be worth \$200–\$400 per acre or more.

Getting a fair price for a lease may involve talking with neighbors—how much are they asking or getting? If much land is involved, development drilling is active, or the exploration potential is high, you may want to hire a petroleum landman. A list of them is in the yellow pages of the telephone directory under "Oil Land Leases." Information about individual petroleum landmen may be obtained from the Oklahoma City or Tulsa Association of Petroleum Landmen (Appendix 3).

### **30. Who owns the mineral rights to my property?**

Records of surface and mineral ownership rights are maintained at county courthouses and are open to the public. You can examine these records by contacting the county clerk. Complex mineral rights should be determined by a petroleum landman.

Professional petroleum landmen are experienced in determining mineral and surface rights. If your property is large or has a complex history of ownerships, there may be a long and complicated "paper trail" associated with the land. In this case, you may want to hire a petroleum landman (see question 29).

### **31. What are the names of the formations that produce oil/gas near where I live?**

Many geological formations in Oklahoma produce oil and gas. Most have names; in some cases, several. Stratigraphic charts and completion reports show productive formations.

There are hundreds, if not thousands, of formations in Oklahoma that produce oil and/or gas. In some parts of Oklahoma, only one formation is productive; in other parts, many formations produce oil or gas. Stratigraphic nomenclature in Oklahoma is complicated for several reasons. (1) In some cases, several names have been used for the same formation; in other cases, the same name has been applied to different formations. (2) Some companies apply their own terminology to the formations they encounter in their wells, ignoring generally accepted names. (3) A formation exposed on the surface may have a name that is entirely different from the name for the same formation in the subsurface. (4) A formation name once in general use may become obsolete and be abandoned. (5) Geologists may disagree about how to define a formation and what to call it.

The best initial reference for determining the name of a producing formation is a stratigraphic chart showing the subsurface formation names for different parts of Oklahoma. You can obtain these from the OGS (Appendix 1) or from the Ardmore, Oklahoma City, or Tulsa Geological Societies (Appendix 3). The Natural Resources Information System (NRIS) database and scout tickets (see question 27) also list productive formations, but the formation names listed are those reported by the oil companies, which may be inaccurate, misleading, or obsolete.