Variances depend on age, experience

Overall Salaries Show Slight Gain This Year

By VERN STEFANIC, EXPLORER Managing Editor

Salaries for petroleum geologists continued to climb in most categories during the past year, but at a slower rate than previous years – and the amount of the increase depended greatly on the amount of experience a geologist was bringing to the job.

This year's annual AAPG Salary Survey shows a weighted average increase of 1.4 percent in geoscience salaries in 2012-13.

AYLING

Mike Ayling, of MLA Resources in Tulsa, who has conducted the annual salary survey for AAPG since 1981, said that some age and experience groups within the survey actually did better than the overall average.

Others did not.

"The salaries that were up were largely due to people just coming into the business, or very experienced people," Ayling said.

"The 0-2 year experience levels showed a small increase, up 6 percent," Ayling continued, "but recently graduated bachelor level geologists also had a difficult time finding work – and the few that did, worked for lower salaries, depressing the overall average.

"Master's grads are getting hired on a pretty regular basis," he added. "Those with bachelor's degrees are finding fewer jobs."

2012-13 Geological Salary Survey

YEARS EXPER	HIGH	AVERAGE	LOW
0-2	$ 113,000	$ 100,500	$ 85,000
3-5	124,000	101,000	80,000
6-9	132,000	127,800	124,000
10-14	207,000	147,000	115,000
15-19	278,000	190,300	144,400
20-24	285,000	211,600	150,000
25+	425,000	212,000	147,000

Average Salary By Degree

YEARS EXPER	B.S.	M.S.	Ph.D.
0-2	$ 89,000	$ 103,000	$ 110,700
3-5	88,900	106,700	120,900
6-9	124,000	113,700	128,000
10-14	130,000	139,500	178,900
15-19	170,000	191,600	193,800
20-24	199,800	217,500	----------
25+	187,600	217,200	270,000

Historical Averages Salary

YEARS EXPER	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
0-2	$ 67,800	$ 74,400	$ 82,200	$ 82,800	$ 83,600	$ 87,600	$ 93,000	$ 98,700	$ 100,500
3-5	75,600	81,300	89,600	107,800	108,000	105,600	102,300	109,400	101,000
6-9	78,800	95,400	98,500	121,100	118,400	121,700	127,800	137,300	127,800
10-14	107,500	114,400	111,500	119,800	121,900	123,500	139,100	153,400	147,000
15-19	116,000	119,600	141,000	151,600	139,400	150,800	151,000	193,600	190,300
20-24	112,800	139,000	155,000	167,400	176,800	180,300	191,000	199,200	211,600
25+	128,300	134,100	149,900	162,800	171,700	186,800	206,300	199,600	212,000

Also of note: Mid-experienced geoscientists (from three to 19 years experience) actually saw average salaries shrink, dropping from 2 to 8 percent.

Ayling saw this as an adjustment to the previous trend.

"These people have been in high demand for the past two-three years," he said of the group, noting their average salaries had "increased significantly over the past two years.

"While these groups remain in strong demand, perhaps lethargic overall hiring has taken a toll on averages," he said.

He also noted that those within the age groups may be receiving bonuses from their companies, "and there would be no way of accounting for that in our survey."

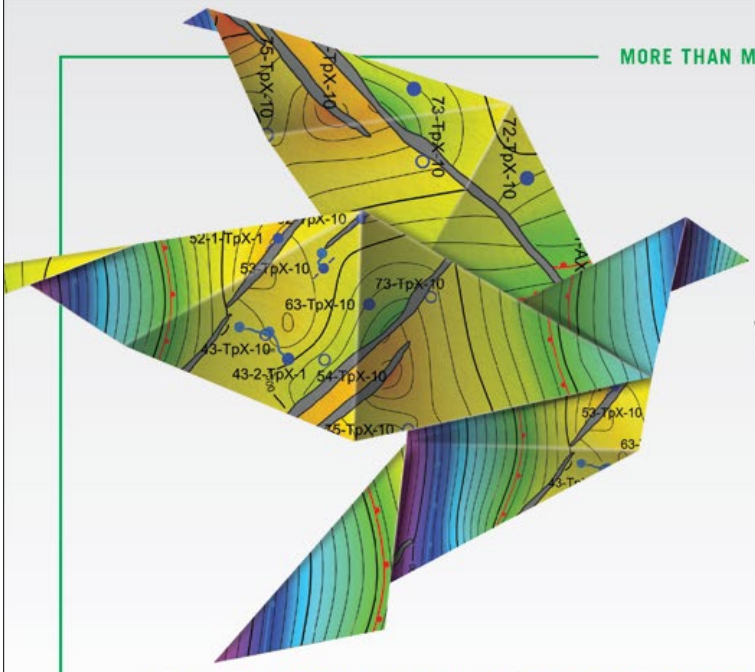
The more experienced geologists showed a 6.2 percent increase this year, "perhaps reflecting the value placed on their ability to contribute during a slack time of industry growth, a desire to retain experienced staff and a bit to make up for lower increases in the past," he said.

Even for the more experienced category there was a wide variance in salaries, which Ayling surmised may reflect the salaries of "those who are in management versus the working geologist."

The AAPG annual survey is based on U.S. salaries only, still considered the "gold standard" for the industry. The measurement for international salaries for explorationists is virtually on a country-by-country, case-by-case basis, Ayling said, which makes statistical averaging non-productive beyond the boundaries of any specific country.

Also, many ex-pats are paid U.S.-based salaries, while the national oil companies opt to pay compatriots on a different, lower scale.

MORE THAN MAPPING



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