

# Lewis finds niche in oil patch through Webb County

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Rod Lewis has spent many years of his life in Webb County and South Texas.

It was this area that played a pivotal role in Lewis' start in the oil and gas industry.

Lewis, who is president and chief executive officer of Lewis Energy Group based in San Antonio, said last week that he started his company in northern Webb County.

"I guess you could say we were based south of Encinal," Lewis said.

"We're more of a Webb County homegrown company.

Now I did get my education in Laredo and my dad was at the base (Laredo Air Force Base) when it was closed in 1971."

Lewis is one of three new inductees into the Laredo Business Hall of Fame.

His induction will be part of a ceremony scheduled for May 6 at Laredo Country Club.

He recalled his days of living on the family ranch in Encinal while going to college at then-Texas A&I University in Laredo, where he earned a bachelor's degree in criminal justice in 1976.

After graduating, Lewis started working as a gas well gauger for Stampede Energy in 1978. He bought his first well in 1982.

Webb and Zapata counties have played roles in Lewis' business endeavors.

"They've played almost a 100 percent role in the growth and beginning of the company," he said.

"Most of our holdings are in South Texas, especially Webb County.

"The first gas well that I bought was in Webb County and we're still drilling in Webb County."

Lewis' vision was to build a vertically integrated company, buy out the competition, own most of the acreage and have a stronghold on the market.

Now, Lewis Energy Group is a fully integrated, privately held exploration and production company with approximately 325 employees and more than 1,000 wells.

LEG also claims a strong presence in Mexico and Colombia.

He is on the board of directors of the National Air and Space Museum. Lewis lives in San Antonio with his wife and their four children.

Lewis said "it's a great honor to receive an award like this and be honored by my peers."

"It's truly wonderful to be honored for what our people have been doing in the area for the oil and gas industry," Lewis said.

"I think a lot of Junior Achievement and what they can do for young people.

I wish I could have been exposed more to JA as a younger person and learned more entrepreneurial stuff before getting further into business.

"I hope young people in Laredo and Webb County can look at our company and know that if you work hard and have a desire, you can build whatever you want to build," Lewis said.

Lewis joins Imelda Navarro of International Bank of Commerce-Laredo and Tom Lamont of LOG Energy Exploration and Hal's Landing on the 2010 Laredo Business Hall of Fame induction list.

For more information, call Junior Achievement of Laredo at (956) 725-3464.

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