

DOW 14,840.95 Up 16.44 (+0.1%)	S&P 500 1,638.17 Up 3.21 (+0.2%)	OIL \$108.70 Down \$1.30 (-1.2%)	NATURAL GAS \$3.618 Up 3.6¢ (+1.0%)
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Apache sells stake in Egypt business

Deal to part with assets will make Houston company a partner with a unit of Chinese oil giant Sinopec

By Don Mason

Houston-based Apache Corp. is selling a third of its oil and gas business in Egypt to China's Sinopec for \$3.1 billion cash, in what the companies described Thursday as part of a global exploration and production partnership.

The sale is the latest in a multibillion-dollar portfolio rebalancing by Apache that this summer alone has included



"Sinopec is an ideal partner for us," Apache CEO Steven Farris says.

the sale of Canadian producing assets for \$214 million and shallow-water Gulf of Mexico producing assets for \$3.8 billion.

If the latest deal closes in the fourth quarter as the companies expect, it will push the Houston oil and gas independent well beyond the \$4 billion in asset sales it had predicted for 2013 — a prospect CEO Steven Farris had hinted at when the company announced the Gulf sale July 18.

Apache will continue to operate the Egyptian business. Farris said in a statement Thursday that the deal with Sinopec International Petro-

leum Exploration and Production Corp. combines the Chinese company's technical expertise with Apache's 20 years of experience in Egypt.

The Chinese upstream company is a wholly owned subsidiary of Sinopec.

"Sinopec is an ideal partner for us, and we look forward to the growth and value generation ahead for both companies through the expansion of our collaboration to other projects," Farris said.

The deal is subject to regulatory approval.

Apache said daily average net production last year from

its operations in Egypt was 100,000 barrels of oil and 354 million cubic feet of natural gas.

The company said it employs 9,000 Egyptians directly or through joint ventures.

Political turmoil and violence have roiled Egypt since the ouster of strongman Hosni Mubarak in 2011 and of elected President Mohammed Morsi in early July.

But Apache said its operations are in remote areas "unaffected by political events in the region."

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FUELFIX.COM Permian Basin

Report sees big growth in two plays

By Collin Eaton

Two plays in the Permian Basin could see a surge in production and together account for 38 percent of the West Texas region's oil output by 2018, according to report released this week by energy research firm Wood Mackenzie.

Exploration and production giants including Apache Corp., ConocoPhillips and Chevron Corp. are positioned to lead an investment boost in the oil fields, and in five years, capital expenditures could jump 57 percent to \$22 billion in the two Permian plays. Together, the Bone Spring and the Wolfcamp plays could pump 1 million barrels of oil per day by 2018, Wood Mackenzie reports.

"The Permian Basin is a very mature region, but now horizontal drilling is allowing operators to

Horizontal continues on D6

REAL ESTATE

Demand for homes far ahead of supply

By Erin Mulvaney

Houston-area developers have enough houses and apartments to supply just half of the expected demand over the coming year, an analyst told a gathering of industry leaders Thursday.

"We are trying to catch up with the demand by putting more lots on the ground," said David Jarvis, regional director of Metrostudy's Houston market. "We are a little behind because we didn't develop much during the recession."

Jarvis said data from Metrostudy, which analyzes the local real estate market, show that construction has begun on 26,000 homes over the past 12 months but that demand for the year is for

Builder continues on D6



Cody Duty photos / Houston Chronicle

Demonstrators in front of a Taco Bell on Richmond Avenue call Thursday for improved wages for fast-food workers. The Houston protesters were part of a national movement calling for the minimum wage to be increased to \$15 per hour.

FAST FOOD

Their pay isn't super-sized

Local protests reflect national efforts to raise minimum level to 'living wage' of \$15 an hour

By L.M. Sixel and Craig Hlavaty

About 100 protesters crowded the sidewalk in front of a Galleria-area Burger King during Thursday's lunch rush to call for raising wages to \$15 an hour. A smaller group held a similar protest earlier in the day at a Burger King in the Montrose area and a Taco Bell on Richmond Avenue.

In similar protests at fast-food restaurants across the nation, protesters called attention to the gap between the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour and the "living wage," which is the amount it takes to cover the basics of food, housing and health care. Workers nation-



U.S. Rep. Al Green and state Sen. Sylvia Garcia, both Houston Democrats, were at a Burger King, urging better pay for fast-food employees.

On the menu

» **Weigh in:** Should fast-food workers be paid more? Like our Facebook page, then let us know with a comment at chron.com/fastfoodpay.

» **An extra look:** For more photos of the fast-food workers' protests in Houston, go to chron.com/fastfoodprotest.

wide are calling for \$15 an hour. Casey Martinez said he heard about the protests on his way to work and decided to join the group outside the Burger King, where he has worked five months.

"You don't know how long I've been waiting to go on strike," said Martinez, 22, who supports a 5-year-old-niece and 7-year-old nephew.

He said he earns \$775 an hour, for 30 to 35 hours a week, at Burger King. He said he earns \$750 an hour, for another 30 hours a week, working as a security guard.

"I need at least \$15," said Martinez, who was wearing his Burger King uniform

Chain continues on D6

DIGEST

INSURANCE

Chairman quits after an officer's apparent suicide

GENEVA — The chairman of the Zurich Insurance Group abruptly resigned Thursday over the apparent suicide of its chief financial officer, claiming he wants to avoid damaging the

struggling company's reputation.

Josef Ackermann said that he was resigning because he believed the undisclosed accusations leveled against him by the family of deceased CFO Pierre Wauthier could hurt Zurich. Ackermann said Wauthier's family believes he bears some responsibility for the death.

BANKRUPTCY

Judge indicates OK for American Airlines' plan

NEW YORK — A federal judge, Sean Lane, signaled Thursday that he is leaning toward approving American Airlines' emergence from bankruptcy protection but wanted more time to reflect.

Such a decision would still leave one obstacle — although a big one — to American's proposed merger with US Airways: an antitrust lawsuit filed by the government earlier this month.

IN OTHER NEWS

» Mortgage buyer Freddie Mac said the average 30-year loan fell

to 4.51 percent from 4.50 percent last week, the highest since July 2011. The average 15-year fixed mortgage dipped to 3.54 percent from 3.60 percent.

» Britain's Vodafone, one of the world's largest cellphone companies, confirmed it was talking to Verizon Communications about selling its stake in Verizon Wire-

less, the No. 1 mobile carrier in the U.S.

» Investing group Blackstone has agreed to pay \$85 million to settle a lawsuit brought by investors who accused it of misrepresenting some investments ahead of its 2007 initial public offering. Blackstone denied any wrongdoing.

From wire reports