

REFERENCE

PAMPHLET

H.B.--History  
News Clippings

FOR REFERENCE

NOT TO BE TAKEN FROM LIBRARY

HUNTINGTON BEACH PUBLIC LIBRARY  
7111 Talbert Avenue  
Huntington Beach, CA 92648

# Goodbye to Huntington Beach Wells

■ **Oceanfront: Officials sign a 'landmark' agreement with the oil company to cap the wells and remove the derricks.**

By BILL BILLITER  
TIMES STAFF WRITER

*D.C.*  
*La. Times*  
*3-6-90*

HUNTINGTON BEACH—Bobbing oil derricks by the sea will soon be a thing of the past, the City Council announced Monday night.

In an agreement hailed as "a landmark," Chevron USA and the council on Monday sealed an agreement for the capping of 25 oil wells on the ocean side of Pacific Coast Highway north of the pier. The shutdown is to begin within the next three months.

Chevron USA officials said they had agreed to close down the wells even though more than \$1 million in oil could still be extracted from them. Council members voted unanimously to approve the agreement.

"We are doing this both to help the city and for safety reasons," said David Villa, an attorney for Chevron USA.

Villa said the city has built a bluff-top park in the area of the oil wells and that many motorists park nearby.

The resulting pedestrian traffic has made operation of the wells something of a safety concern, Villa said.

Council members said the city has been negotiating with the oil company over the past seven years and the agreement to close the wells is a historic breakthrough for city beautification.

"This is a real landmark," Councilman John Erskine said.

The agreement calls for capping the wells and removing derrick equipment.

"Chevron is agreeable to terminate its surface rights in order to enable the city's unencumbered use of the property," the agreement reads. Chevron agreed to pay most of the costs for the closure, with the city's contribution not to exceed \$650,000.

Villa noted that Chevron, had it chosen to hold out and keep the wells active, could have produced at least \$1.2 million in revenue. But he said the oil company is pleased to have worked out a closure agreement with the city.

Municipal officials said the removal of Chevron's 25 oil wells on the oceanfront would leave only four wells in that area. Those belong to Shell Oil Co., and the city

Please see OIL WELLS, B6

## OIL WELLS

**Continued from B1**  
is negotiating with Shell for their removal, staff officials said.

The wells date back to the 1920s, according to Louis F. Sandoval, director of public works. At one time, Huntington Beach was studded with a network of high-rise oil derricks.

The derricks were built after the famous oil strike of 1920, which made Huntington Beach one of the major oil cities in the world. The city was a sleepy seaside village then, and few objected to the construction of derricks—even along the beach.

But in recent years, a growing environmental movement in the city has worked for the removal of oil wells and unsightly derricks along the oceanfront. A decline in oil production in the area has hastened the changes.

The city has been promoting itself more as a tourist and business area than as an oil-producing city, and a multimillion-dollar redevelopment project in downtown Huntington Beach is geared toward enhancing tourist and convention business.

Even though oil reserves have been declining, there is still a large pool of oil under the city. Villa, in response to a question from Mayor Thomas J. Mays, said Monday night that Chevron had anticipated keeping the wells active for 15 more years.

Villa credited the negotiating skill of Sandoval in helping to arrange a speedier exit of the oil wells. "Lou is a very good negotiator," Mays agreed.

In an interview after the meeting, Villa said that most of the 25 oil wells will be removed by late summer and all will be gone by March, 1991.