AES DRILLING FLUIDS

Specially engineered and formulated fluid systems perform a vital role in oilfield drilling, so AES Drilling Fluids, LLC (AES) provides a full range of products used across U.S. shale plays. The company's suite of innovative products and systems saves its customers time and money.

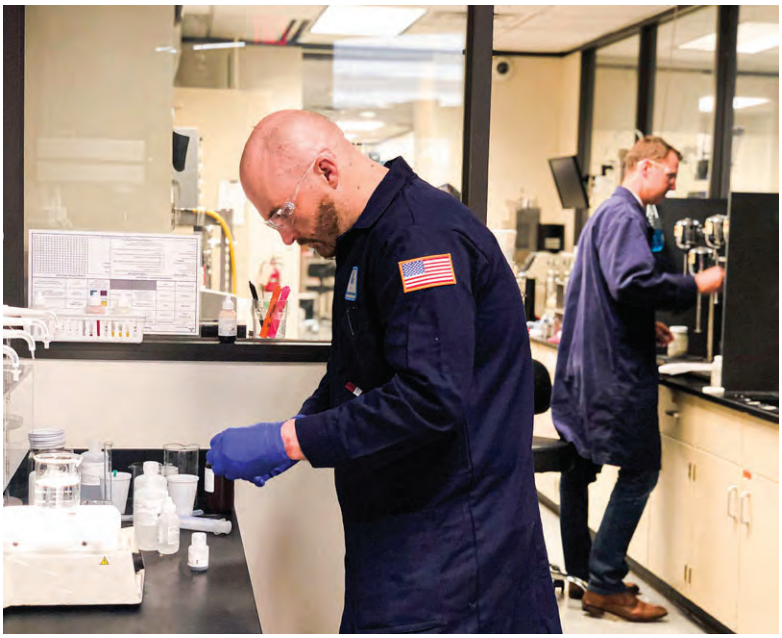
Saving Time & Money

AES DRILLING FLUIDS

Written by Robert H oshowsky

Founded over two decades ago, Houston-headquartered AES Drilling Fluids not only lives by the motto that 'Better Fluids Equal Better Wells,' but puts this into practice by investing in ongoing research and development, listening to client needs, and fostering awareness of the industry through its publications and use of digital media.

AES provides all the capabilities found in much larger companies and prides itself on professional and personalized service and solutions. Widely used products – those used by all oilfield customers for drilling – are available, while the company formulates others for clients operating in certain areas.



"On occasion, we have customers who have a specific problem or want to see a specific technology and try it out, so we will develop something specifically for them," states Technology and Marketing Manager Matt Offenbacher. If AES does not have an existing product or solution available, the company has the abilities to create one in the laboratory as well as perform testing, validation, and deployment.

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The company performs most of its work in-house but will occasionally work with outside companies. Since there is such a broad spectrum of products, it makes sense to deal with other experts and take advantage of their experience. This is all part of the business moving away from the 'pre-packaged fluid system' culture to serve the needs of its clients better.

AES leads the drilling fluids market with a range of unique water-based drilling fluid systems and invert emulsion drilling fluid systems like EnerSEAL. Similar technologies to EnerSEAL have been on the market for some time, although issues with their stability limited their use. AES developed EnerSEAL to overcome these issues, so that performance benefits can be realized in the field."

Another popular product is AES's water-based EnerLITE Direct Emulsion System. Popular with clients working in the Permian Basin, the EnerLITE system saves rig time and equipment and logistics expenses by eliminating casing string through low density and salt inhibition.

Taking it a step further, AES also has a service called EnerLITE RECOVER. While drilling, it's possible to minimize solids accumulation to limit or eliminate oil dilution for density control. "When the EnerLITE system is no longer needed, such as at the end of a pad, the liquid phases can be separated," according to the company. "In some cases, more than fifty percent of the oil can be recovered and reused to make EnerLITE or AES VERT. The brine is also reusable, minimizing transportation and disposal costs."

AES's facility in Kermit, Texas recently underwent a major expansion, doubling in size, representing the company's investment in the business and the region. The Kermit facility is the largest in the Permian Basin, consisting of a liquid mud plant, full mixing facility, chemical warehouse and four 300-ton bulk barite loading silos. "We expanded it because it's where most of our customers focus their activity," says Offenbacher. "We pride ourselves on having more than enough capacity to meet their needs."

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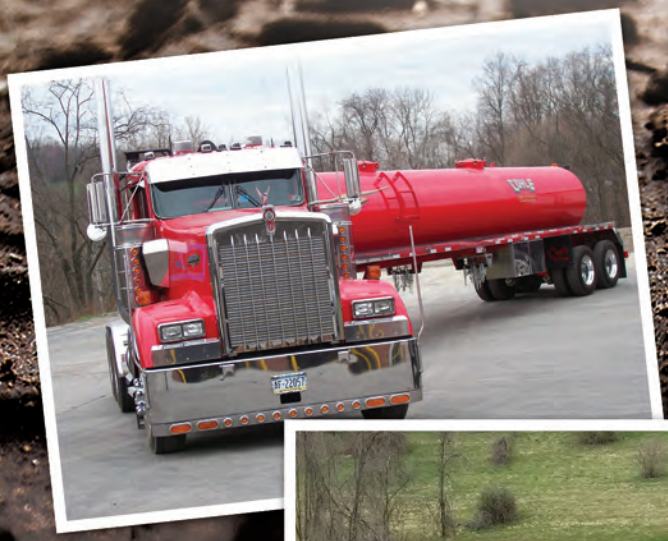

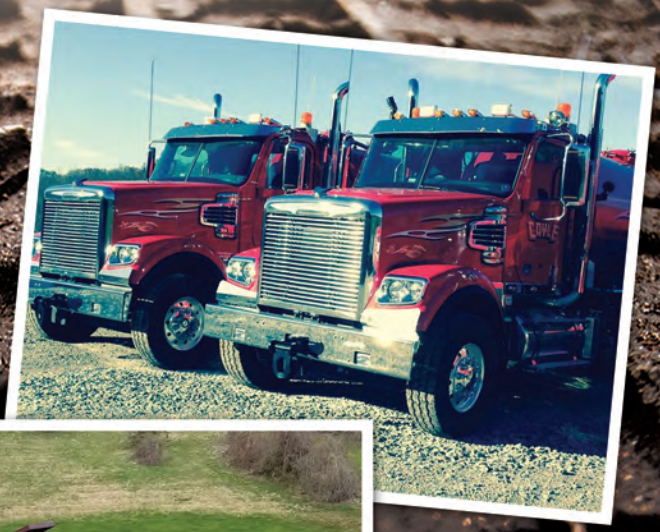

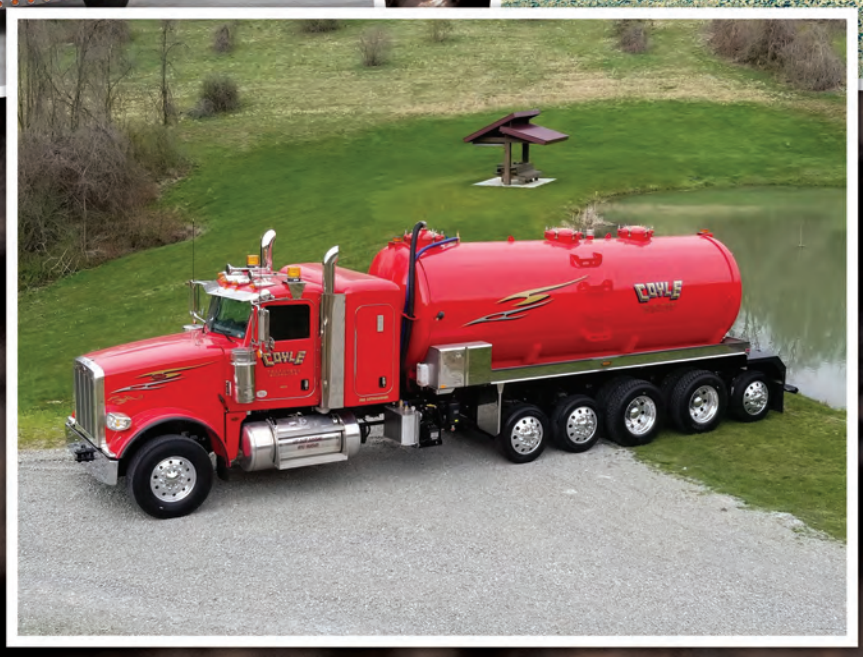

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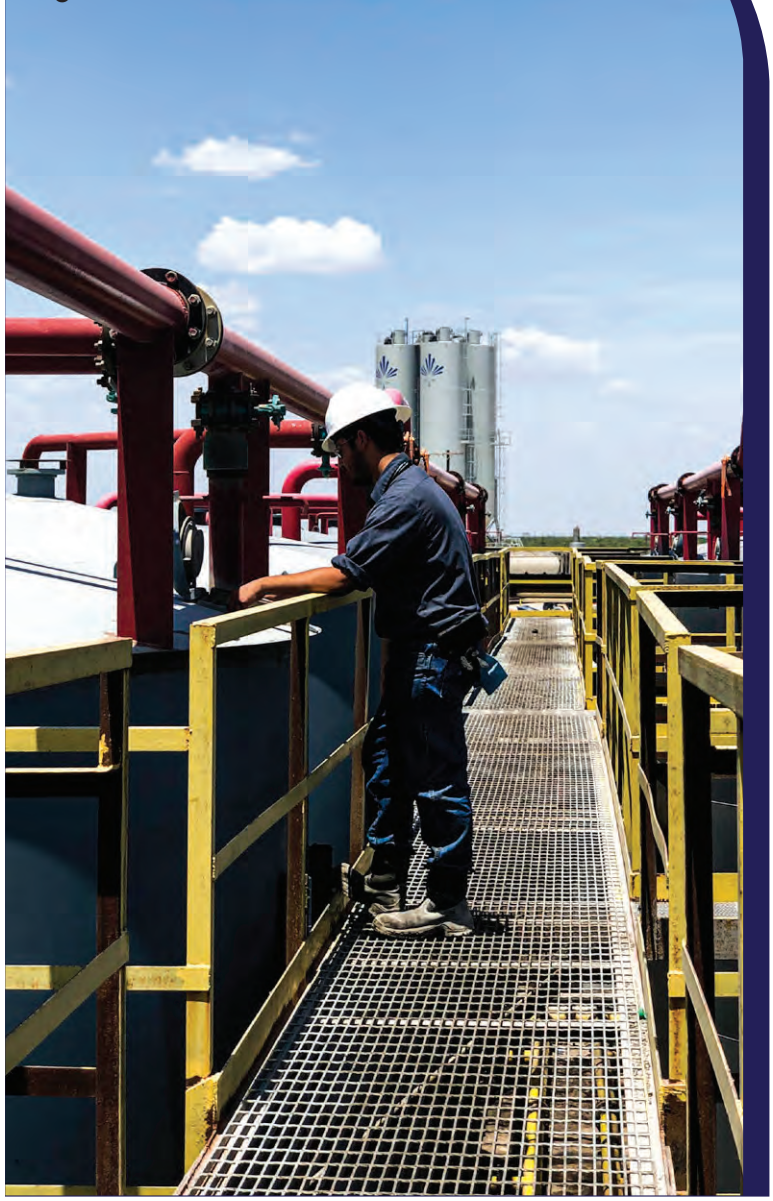
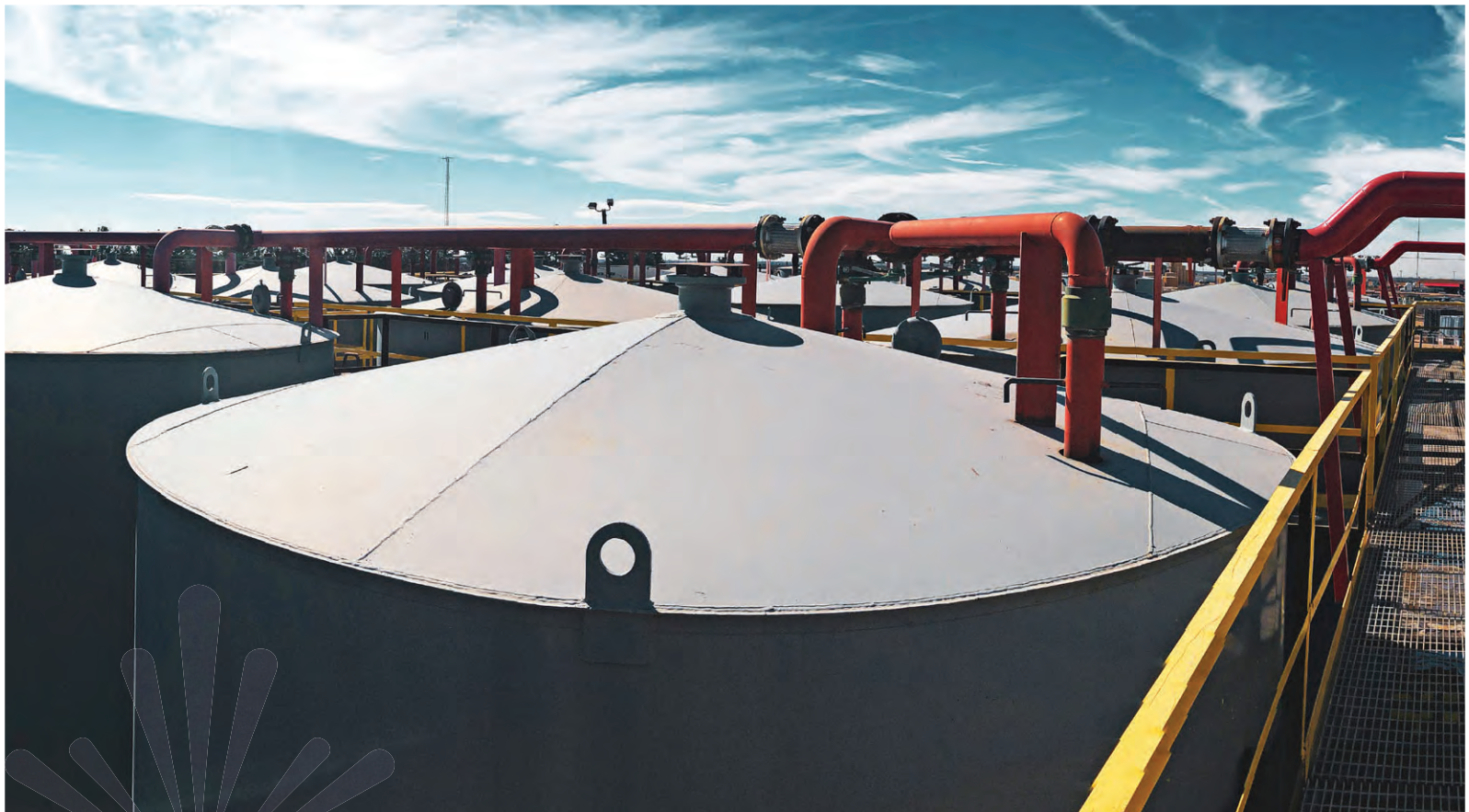


The Kermit facility sits on twenty-seven acres in the heart of the oil-rich Delaware Basin, the most prolific section of the Permian Basin. The facility mixes a variety of drilling fluids and stores the necessary components including large amounts of barite, an ore integral to the production of barium mud used during oil drilling.

"Barite is probably the most important commodity in the mud system," says Vice President James Strickland, adding that while some other companies have a hard time finding trucks to get to a rig, AES's investment in infrastructure at Kermit ensures the company has ample access to barite and other products to serve customers and not run out. "And it's not only barite, but we probably have more mixing plants than anyone else out there, so we can build mud at a faster pace than anyone else."

"We can load a barite truck and get it off to location in ten minutes, and we probably have well over one hundred trucks showing up every day."

AES also works with its sister company which secures ore, grinds it, and ships it by rail to Kermit, ensuring plenty of supply. "You hear about the Permian Basin struggling for trucks all the time. We can load a barite truck and get it off to location in ten minutes, and we probably have well over one hundred trucks showing up every day. So the idea that we can minimize their presence on location and get them back on the road is obviously very significant for our customers."



As part of its continual innovation, the company is developing its own analytics platform , AES ANALYTICS, utilizing large amounts of data which will improve the drilling process for its customers. AES is rolling it out little by little as a pilot program with some customers since there are thousands of data points, and the company wants to ensure they are reliable.

Once complete, it will tie into a Smartphone app accessible "anywhere and everywhere," says Offenbacher. "Our account managers will have a very detailed level access, and our customers will have a level of access that helps them track benchmarks they ask us for, and then we can customize it as needed, so everyone can do their job better."

The company's ***The Flowline: An AES Drilling Fluids Podcast*** is the first of its kind in the industry. "We mention our products, but we are not aggressively promoting them," says Technology and Marketing Manager Matt Offenbacher. "We are trying to educate the industry. The idea is, if a customer is listening, we might not talk about their specific problem, but they know they can call us at any time, and we can probably address it."

Topics discussed on the weekly podcast vary. Recent episodes have covered drilling fluid density, viscosity, electrical stability, and the drilling fluid circulating system. ***The Flowline*** also features guests such as company Vice President James Strickland and Operations Manager Nate Castaneda discussing facilities required for full-service drilling fluids operations.

"We also answer listener questions, which is really fun because we get a lot of questions from our competitors, which we enjoy, and from people in the industry asking us to make an episode for something they want to understand better," states Offenbacher.

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The company also has a YouTube channel which is aimed at engaging and educating both existing and prospective customers about its solutions and explaining common technical concepts.

Offenbacher says that the company's many superior products are just one factor setting AES Drilling Fluids apart from the competition. "It is very difficult to quantify service," he comments. "You can have the best technology in the world, but if you don't have the right people to deliver it, it's not worth anything. We are fortunate to have the combination of great service, being able to solve basic problems at a commodity level, and go as technologically intense as our customer needs to tackle a problem. I can't emphasize enough how much I believe in the service we have to offer and how it makes everything else we do so much better." ■

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