

## United Way, Y reap benefits from the Barnett Shale drilling boom

**Chesapeake pledges \$1 million to United Way; XTO gives \$500,000 to YMCA.**

**By DAVID WETHE**  
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FORT WORTH — As energy companies rake in the cash from the Barnett Shale boom, they're making names for themselves as philanthropists.

Chesapeake Energy pledged \$1 million Thursday to the United Way of Tarrant County, kicking off the first-ever Barnett Shale Endowment Fund.

And hours before that announcement, the YMCA of Fort Worth sent out news releases that XTO Energy will donate \$500,000 to remodel and expand the wellness center at the Downtown YMCA.

The companies say they're not necessarily competing. But Tim McKinney, president and chief executive of United Way, might see it otherwise.

"I think all the energy firms are pretty darn competitive," he said. Asked whether the rivalry spills into the world of corporate giving, he said, "Let's hope so."

Julie Wilson, vice president of Chesapeake, is not so sure that other energy companies pose strong competition in giving.

"I think there's no question that we give the most money," she said. "We understand that our industry is misunderstood."

XTO stayed relatively quiet about its donations.

"We give a huge amount but much smaller increments, trying to spread our donations around to more people so more folks benefit," said Vaughn Vennerberg, senior executive vice president for XTO. "We've always been more under the surface."

Chesapeake's donation will be made in five annual installments of \$200,000. The company attached no restrictions on the donation, but the United Way can spend only 5 percent of the balance of the fund each year.

Fort Worth-based XTO gets to attach its name to a newly remodeled wellness center at the YMCA, which will be moved from the third floor to the ground floor of the 83-year-old



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From left, Bill Thornton of the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce, Tim McKinney of the United Way of Tarrant County, Arlington City Councilman Mel LeBlanc, Fort Worth Mayor Mike Moncrief and Fort Worth City Councilman Sal Espino participate in the ribbon cutting for the new United Way of Tarrant County headquarters Thursday.

### Big bucks to charity

Recent donations, thanks to the Barnett Shale:

■ In June, Chesapeake announced a \$2.5 million pledge for scholarships to students in Fort Worth and Dallas. The company also gave \$1 million to the Fort Worth Zoo and \$1 million to the building campaign for the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History.

■ For several years, Fort Worth-based XTO Energy has spent about \$700,000 as a sponsor of the Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo and has bought the grand champion steer. XTO has also committed \$4 million over four years to the Museum of Science and History.

■ Devon Energy gave \$3 million to the Museum of Science and History and was the lead donor in the Fort Worth Police and Firefighters Memorial Project with a \$200,000 gift last year. The Oklahoma City company, the largest player in the Barnett Shale, also gave \$100,000 to the North Texas High School Rodeo Association last year.

building at Fifth and Lamar streets downtown.

Fort Worth Mayor Mike Moncrief, who attended the Chesapeake announcement, said that he hadn't heard about the XTO gift but that it is much needed by the Y.

"The community is the beneficiary," he said. "I don't know of another city that has what we have."

The United Way says it's looking not only for other energy companies to give but also property owners who

were paid to lease their mineral rights.

Wilson called on other companies to match Chesapeake's donation. McKinney said his nonprofit is talking with other energy companies to contribute to the endowment.

As she passed the first \$200,000 check to McKinney on Thursday, an audience member seemed to push the competition.

"Game on," he said.

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