

Gas Leak Stopped On Gulf Rig

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — The flow of natural gas, water and sand has been stopped at a drilling rig off Louisiana's coast, the operator and federal regulators said Saturday.

The flow stopped about 7 p.m. Friday, a little more than 2 hours after EnVen Energy Ventures LLC began pumping heavy drilling mud into the well, the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement said in a news release.

The flow began about 8:30 a.m. Thursday.

EnVen, of suburban Metairie, said in a news release that the well is being closely monitored and that the company is working with regulators to find out what caused it and how to safely resume drilling.

Crews were still working to set up barriers to any further natural gas flow, BSEE said.

No injuries or pollution have been reported.

An oil and gas production platform near the EnVen rig was shut down as a precaution.

Wild gas wells tend to be less of an environmental threat than blowouts from oil wells.

A natural gas blowout off Louisiana's coast in July 2013 ended one day later. Authorities believed the well had been clogged by sand and sediment. That rig, operated by Hercules Offshore Inc., blew out and later caught fire. Part of the rig collapsed before the well apparently plugged itself.

The BP PLC blowout in April 2010 off the southeast Louisiana coast killed 11 workers and spewed natural gas and oil for nearly three months from a blown well nearly a mile under the Gulf's surface. The worst environmental damage appeared to be caused by the hundreds of millions of gallons of crude oil that escaped and fouled marshes and seafood grounds.

The EnVen rig is in relatively shallow waters, where measures to control a leak or blowout are easier to manage than in deep waters.

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