

US rig count increases by 12

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HOUSTON -- The number of rigs actively exploring for oil and natural gas in the U.S. increased by 12 this week to 1,518.

Houston-based Baker Hughes Inc. said Friday that 969 rigs were exploring for natural gas and 538 for oil. Eleven were listed as miscellaneous. A year ago this week, the rig count stood at 900.

Of the major oil- and gas-producing states, Texas gained 11 rigs, Oklahoma gained five, New Mexico gained two and Colorado gained one. Louisiana lost two rigs and Alaska, Arkansas and West Virginia each lost one. California, North Dakota, Pennsylvania and Wyoming were unchanged.

The rig count tally peaked at 4,530 in 1981, during the height of the oil boom. The industry posted a record low of 488 in 1999.