

Report on the 2016 GCSSEPM Perkins-Rosen Research Conference December 7-9th, 2016

Conveners: John Snedden, Chris Lowery, and Mike Blum

The theme for the 2016 GCSSEPM Perkins-Rosen Research Conference, held December 7-9, 2016 in Houston, Texas was “Mesozoic of the Gulf Rim and Beyond”. This theme is nod to past work on the Gulf (e.g. 3rd GCSSEPM Conference held in 1984) but also look at the scientific progress made on understanding this prolific hydrocarbon-producing basin. Breakthrough scientific investigations are often founded on technological advances. In the deep Gulf of Mexico, recent improvements in subsalt seismic reflection imaging, deep crustal seismic refraction acquisition, and deep-water drilling are changing our understanding of the deep crustal structure and the Mesozoic origin and evolution of the basin.

The conference began with an optional Mesozoic core workshop coordinated by Laura Zahm. Drill well cores from key intervals included Tuscaloosa Sandstone (presented by Kurtus Woolf), Edwards (Zahm), Calvin (Bob Loucks), Tuscaloosa Marine Shale (Chris Lowery), and Smackover (Zahm). The core workshop was held at the Bureau of Economic Geology Houston core repository. Cores provided a context for rich discussions of Mesozoic sedimentological, stratigraphic, and source richness issues.

The two-day oral and poster was held at the Marathon Oil Conference center near the Houston Galleria. Like previous conferences, speakers were encouraged to present orally, in poster form, and write a paper for the conference proceedings. Notable presentations and posters discussed Mesozoic synrift and sea floor spreading history (Norton et al.; Pascoe et al.; Pindell et al.; Cruz), source rock and petroleum systems development (Pepper; Pashin et al.; Lowery et al.), chronostratigraphy and biostratigraphy (Fillon; Weber and Parker; Denne and Breyer; Rose; Scott et al.), Mexico tectonics and reservoir development (Padilla, Stabler; Cossey et al.; Herrera Palomo). Industry participants from active exploration companies were particularly interested in papers on large untested salt structures with potential Mesozoic reservoirs in Mississippi Canyon (Harding et al.; Kovas et al.). New models for the Louann salt original thickness (Fiduk) and depositional age (Pulham) stimulated considerable discussion. SEPM’s special session on Mesozoic source to sink analysis included papers on the pre-salt strata (Frederick et al.; Weislogel et al.), Jurassic sections (Gomes et al., Essex et al.), Cretaceous to Paleogene sediments (Blum et al.; Milliken et al.; Snedden et al.; Lawton et al.), and even younger Cenozoic sections (Beltrán-Triviño and Martens). As a whole, the presentations, posters, and proceedings publication demonstrate just how far our understanding of the Mesozoic of the Gulf of Mexico has advanced since that 3rd Annual GCSSEPM Research Conference in 1984.

Conference attendance was 128 persons, which exceeded estimates given the current low oil price climate of the past two years. The conference proceedings volume was

released online within a week following the meeting. Conference attendees have access while others can purchase the volume at the SEPM Bookstore. It will be available online at the SEPM Bookstore soon.

<http://sedimentary-geology-store.com>

Abstracts and list of papers can be found at:

http://www.gcssep.org/conference/2016_PandA_Web.pdf

Finally, the conveners would particularly like to thank SEPM for playing a key role in both venue coordinate and registration, handling the last-minute surge of both online and on-site sign-ups. SEPM staff members Cassie Turley and Hayley Cooney's work prior to and during the event allowed us to focus on the technical program which improved the Perkins-Rosen conference overall.

For the conveners

John Snedden
December, 2016