

# TOBIN HARVEY

OIL FIELDS, AIR FORCE ONE AND RENEWABLE ENERGIES

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Based on his winding career path, Tobin Harvey ('88, BS, agricultural economics) has sage advice for today's college students: "Be open to possibilities."

That attitude is the common thread through his diverse job titles, from oil field pipe fitter to renewable energies public policy expert – with a White House appointment and dozens of trips aboard Air Force One – also in the mix.

Today Harvey is vice president of the Washington D.C. office of R. W. Beck Federal, Inc., a new division of R. W. Beck, which provides technical and business services to businesses involved in financial, energy, water/wastewater and solid waste projects. Harvey markets the company's energy and management consulting services to the U.S. Department of Energy and other federal agencies, offering to provide due diligence on multi-million dollar renewable energy projects such as the private sector applications submitted to the federal government for loan guarantees.

## AGRICULTURE AND RENEWABLE ENERGIES

He assumed the post in April 2008 after serving more than six years as a senior advisor to the Assistant Secretary for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy in the DOE. His responsibilities included working with state energy offices as they developed policies for wind, solar and other alternative energy programs.

In some ways, renewable energies and agriculture interests overlap. For example, ethanol biofuels to date are grain-based and our agricultural sector has provided the ability for the private sector to increase production capacity of ethanol considerably over the past few years to meet federal requirements, and wind farms often are placed on leased farm and ranch lands, Harvey said.

"We have seen the critical mass explode for clean energy technologies over the past few years and that translates to opportunity in renewable energies related to agriculture," he said.

Harvey's work in public policy first began on the state level when he was director of the State Energy Conservation Office under the Texas General Services' Commission from February 1995 to August 1999.

At the time, energy efficiency and alternative energies were not a pressing public issue. But, much of the office's technical work on the viability of renewable energies, beginning even before Harvey came on board, has helped then Governor Bush of Texas to develop statewide policies that set the stage for Texas to become the nation's wind energy capital today, he said.

## WEST TEXAS ROOTS

Harvey's first exposure to energy was through his father, who worked in Texas, California, Canada and the Middle East in the oil and gas industries before eventually settling in Midland.

Following high school, Harvey attended a local junior college and worked as a pipe fitter for a company that built refineries. He divided his time between working and earning a degree. He later switched to Texas Tech, where he was placed in the College of Agricultural and Natural Resources because he was undecided about his major.

"I started Texas Tech in the spring of 1983, and was not unlike any new freshman on their first day, somewhat timid and clueless as where to go and how to get there. I worked various jobs while at Tech and used my summers to work in the industry to put money away for the following semesters. In the summer of 1986, I was working at a refinery being built near Seminole. I remember working there one hot June day, and they were about to go through a reduction in workforce. I decided I didn't want to go through that the rest of my life, and climbed down and offered to take the RIF and allow someone who needed the job more to keep it" Harvey said.

He focused completely on his education, and he has high praise for the personal attention he received from the CASNR staff and faculty.

"I believe I got a a better education out of the college of ag sciences than I would have anywhere else," Harvey said.

## FROM PIPE FITTER TO POLITICS

Harvey's post-college career began in November 1988 with Lomas Mortgage in Dallas. A year later, he worked for a Resolution Trust Corporation subcontractor that provided due diligence of loan assets at faulting banks and savings and loans. Harvey traveled across the country on short-term assignments.

The down time between assignments allowed him to accept an offer to enter the behind-the-scenes world of politics from a friend who was Assistant Press Secretary to President George H. W. Bush (41) which led to working for the Bush/Quayle '92 presidential campaign. From August to November 1992, Harvey worked on the campaign's advance team.

"Everything on the ground has to be arranged – the car, the driver, what the principal will be doing at the event site, the lighting, sound, crowd control," Harvey said to explain the work.

And, in those days, they did not have cell phones. Harvey recalls one time traveling to an upcoming campaign stop in New Hampshire and "it seemed every 10 minutes we were pulling over the car to find a phone booth; not sure those exist any more," he said.

After the campaign ended, Harvey returned to the mortgage industry as an underwriter until George W. Bush's Texas governor's race in 1994, when he did advance work for the campaign.

Following the election, he joined the State Energy Conservation Office.

Harvey returned to advance team work on the national political trail when Gov. Bush ran for the 2000 presidency. "Someone told me once that advance work is like looking at a picture of three ducks gliding on water. But, when you look up close those ducks are not gliding over the water, but rather those feet are paddling just as fast as they can to stay above the water," Harvey said.

In January 2001, Harvey was named associate director of presidential advance in the Executive Office of the President. His responsibilities included coordinating the advance team, logistics and schedule for President and Mrs. Bush's domestic and foreign trips, including numerous international trips during those first eight months in office.

"Tobin brings a humble and honest approach to problem solving that has made him a highly sought out commodity on national



presidential campaigns, federal government hierarchy and Fortune 500 companies alike. Tobin no doubt embodies that West Texas can-do attitude and leadership by example traits that have epitomized his success," said Patrick Rhode, special assistant to the president of the United States in 2001 and Cintra's United States vice president of corporate affairs.

## PERSONAL REWARDS

The White House experience was exciting, but also a 24/7 grind. Harvey welcomed the chance to join the DOE in August 2001.

Despite the many professional rewards of his unconventional career path, Harvey considers a personal one as the greatest. While at The White House, he met his wife, Lauren. They were married in 2003, and today they have a 2-year-old son, Spencer Prescott.

"All my choices have led me to my wonderful wife and family," Harvey said.