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## WORKING AWAY FROM HOME, SOCIAL MEDIA & REMOTE HOUSING IN THE EAGLE FORD SHALE

By Director of Operations, Tom Caufmann

Working distantly from your hometown or out of state typically provides great financial rewards, but it can also be challenging for families and relationships. A great many oilfield workers miss holidays and special moments in their family's day to day life – a son's first baseball game, a daughter's dance recital and so much more. It is a hard adjustment for both the worker and his family.

Workers often say, "I would rather be home every day and see my family, but with our current economy you've got to do, what you've got to do."

Social media has helped tremendously in keeping the familial unit together, even from a distance. Email and Facebook enables an oilfield worker to keep up-to-date on what happens in their household by sharing pictures and videos. Internet applications like Apple's FaceTime and Skype allow them to be almost present – virtually kissing their spouse or children goodnight.

According to a study released in March 2013, by the Center for Community and Business Research at the University of Texas at San Antonio Institute for Economic Development, the Eagle Ford Shale delivered more than \$61 billion in total economic impact in 2012. In addition, the region supported 116,000 full-time jobs for workers in oil and gas, support operations, drilling, pipeline construction, refineries and petrochemicals. The study puts the economic impact in 2022 at \$89 billion and 127,000 jobs.

Along with the good, comes the bad. All these workers need a place to stay.

Temporary and permanent housing are in short supply throughout North America's oil and gas plays, especially in the Eagle Ford Shale area. Finding adequate lodging can be a daunting task.

Housing does not have to be just a place to sleep. As an example, The Studios at Carrizo Springs exemplifies this on many levels. Spacious, comfortable and fully furnished apartment-style living is one of the remote housing options available just off Highway 83 in Carrizo Springs, Texas. The Studios, set on a 25-acre gated and paved site, can accommodate almost 500 men. Their state of the art dining facility, operated by world renowned Taylors International, can serve

1,000 meals per day! Chef James prides himself in offering a lot more than high in fat and fried food. Hand-trimmed rib eyes, King Crab legs and his famous ribs are regulars on the menu.

"We've become a second family here for these guys. The Studios has become their home away from home," says Lee Trevino, Facilities Manager.

The Studios' management is very involved in the well-being of the guests.

"We listen to what's important to them," states Trevino. "They asked about a basketball hoop and our owners ordered an NBA quality one that very day!"

Watching major sports events certainly passes the time, too.

"The guys really didn't want to go into town after a long, hot day to see the Mayweather boxing match. After a few phone calls, we arranged for them to spend an evening in the Recreation Room (dubbed the 'Man Cave') laughing, eating and watching the match," says Trevino.

The Eagle Ford Shale Play provides a terrific opportunity for the oilfield worker and surrounding towns. Businesses have seen a huge increase in sales and restaurants are always busy. The trade-off is not being around your family and friends for extended periods, which can, at times, be lonely and frustrating.

Securing remote housing that gives you just a piece of what your missing makes it that much better – The Studios at Carrizo Springs seems to be one of those places.



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